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Contents

The Week 54

Editorials

More Myth than Man..... 57
Fooling the Farmers Again..... 59

General Articles

A Financial Path to Peace.....S. O. Levinson 61
Soil Waste and the Flood Menace...Robert Stewart 64
Alfred the Near-Great.....Felix Ray 67
Voices.....Robert Littell 68
Mass Meeting.....T. S. Matthews 69
The Reinhardt Shakespeare.....Stark Young 71

Correspondence 72

Reviews of Books

Northcliffe the Unrevealed.....Norman Angell 74
Cabell and Colloids.....E. W. 75
A New England Romantic.....Allen Tate 75
Nor Jeremiad nor Pollyanalysis....Nathaniel Peffer 76
The Hero as Plutocrat.....Max Lerner 77
Fiction Notes 78

The Week

THE conference on limitation of armaments which opened in Geneva this week is chiefly notable for the presence of Russia. For the first time, all the chief nations of the world have gathered around the council table to see whether they cannot reduce the burden of military expenditures, which, for some of them, constitutes such a crushing load. Part of the obstacles which, in the past, have rendered success difficult have been cleared away. With the United States and Russia both present, it is no longer possible to put forward the excuse that any agreement achieved would be only a partial one. The difficulties which still remain are so great, however, that there is not more than one chance in a hundred that this conference will accomplish anything of importance. The nations are as suspicious of one another, and as little inclined to put their trust in anything but the force of their own arms, as at any time in the recent past. There is bad blood between France and Italy, Jugoslavia and Italy, England and Russia, Poland and Germany, Poland and Russia, Rumania and Russia. Despite the agreements made by their industrialists, France and Germany remain at loggerheads over the Rhine occupation, the proposed uniting of Germany and Austria, and conflicting policies toward Russia and Poland. The League, while it has proved itself indispensable in minor and routine matters, is unable to cope with any serious dispute between major powers, which is invariably taken out of its hands and settled behind the scenes. As time passes, it becomes increasingly clear that disarmament must follow, and not precede, the providing of alternate —and less illusory—forms of security, though not security of the unreasonable kind and extent France has demanded.

THE nervous state of the diplomats was shown by the series of incidents which came, probably by no accident, just before the disarmament conference opened. The Polish-Lithuanian dispute is to be discussed by the League within a fortnight; and a few days ago, rumors suddenly became rife that Poland intended to foment a Lithuanian revolution and seize the whole country as she seized the city of Vilna seven years ago. Russia promptly warned Poland that such an action would not be tolerated. Litvinoff was in Berlin at the moment, on his way to Geneva. A conference ensued, between Stresemann and himself, and the statement they made public was interpreted as meaning that Germany and Russia would stand together against Poland. It is true that relations between Germany and Poland have long been bad; but neither Germany nor Russia wants war if it can possibly be avoided. Practically speaking, Germany is disarmed; and, in any case, she is playing a conciliatory game with France, whose satellite Poland is, and with England, in the hope of getting the Rhineland freed, reparations reduced, and some of her former colonies restored. Russia believes that the Baldwin government is only looking for an excuse to attack her, and will certainly not resort to arms if she can help it. War is always a possibility, in Eastern Europe; but at the moment it is not a probability.

THE situation between France and Italy is one of increasing strain. The Franco-Jugoslav treaty which caused such dismay, real or assumed, in Rome, has been "answered" by an Italo-Albanian compact, which runs for twenty years instead of the

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five specified in the former document. There is, of course, no reality to any new agreement between Italy and Albania; the little country on the eastern shore of the Adriatic has long been in Mussolini's pocket. For that matter, the treaty between France and Jugoslavia did no more than confirm an arrangement which had existed for some time. But diplomats who are able to ignore secret arrangements can no longer do so when these have been brought out into the light. It may be true, as some optimistic observers believe, that France and Italy, which have always made faces at one another, would not carry their animosity past the danger point; but the Balkans constitute a poor stage on which to indulge in such exercises. It is always possible that excited onlookers, not realizing that the principals are not in earnest, may join the game.

THE death of Premier Bratiano of Rumania is likely to have no immediate consequences of international interest. He has been succeeded as Premier, temporarily, by his brother, Vintila Bratiano, a much weaker character. Vintila has also been made titular leader of the misnamed Liberal party. The most powerful political group is now the National Peasants' party, which, despite reports to that effect in the press, is by no means committed to the candidacy of Prince Carol for the throne. That young man, of whom the world has the right to be heartily tired, continues to blow hot and cold from his hiding place near Paris. Vintila Bratiano is seeking to conciliate the peasants by concessions, but is meeting with little success, and it would not be surprising to see the Liberals turned out of office at an election early in the new year.

UNTIL the terms of the rumored loan of $40,000,000 which J. P. Morgan and Company propose to make to the Japanese government on the security of the South Manchurian railway are announced, it will be prudent not to criticize the project too drastically, but on the surface the loan seems to be doubtful as a matter both of business and politics. The security which the Japanese government has to offer is none too good, and might well be regarded with particular suspicion by an American banking house. The South Manchurian Railway Company is operating on a concession which expires in a few years, and was renewed in 1915 by a Chinese government which was helpless under Japanese pressure. Its validity is challenged by the Chinese Nationalists, and if they ever establish an effective government in Peking, the challenge will seriously impair the security of the Japanese title to the railway property in Manchuria which is now being mortgaged. Doubtless the Japanese government is fully capable of protecting its property by armed force, but a railway which needs an army to defend it against an increasingly powerful neighbor and against the probable resentment of the rapidly increasing Chinese population of Manchuria itself does not look like gilt-edged security for a loan. It was the threat which the quarrel about the status of the then existing Manchurian railways raised against the peace of the Far East which prompted President Taft in 1909 to propose to Japan and Russia their neutralization, and if the quarrel involved a menace to peace in 1909, it contains more of a menace in 1928 and after. J. P. Morgan and Company seem to be lending money not on one of the assets of the Japanese government, but on one of its gravest political liabilities.

THERE has always been an influential body of opinion in the United States which has suspected, with reason, that the Allies in Europe would in the end try to unload on the United States the acceptance, in payment of the war debts, of Germany's more dubious promise to pay reparations. This suspicion accounts for the refusal by any branch of the American government to permit the discharge of war debts to become contingent upon the discharge of reparations. Yet, obviously, the two financial obligations form part of the same problem, and any satisfactory and permanent settlement of reparations is inconceivable as long as the contracts call for over sixty years more of large annuities to the United States. Some time soon, the Dawes plan of raising and transferring reparations will come up for consideration, and when it does, there will be an effort to persuade the United States to enter a general conference which will have for its object a final liquidation of the debts which the various European nations owe to one another and to the United States as the result of the War. In view of the fact that eventually the United States will probably have to enter such a conference, it is not too soon to discuss what kind of settlement the American government could reasonably propose. In another column of this issue, Mr. S. O. Levinson, of Chicago, suggests a plan which, in his opinion, would fairly divide the available assets among the creditors. It is certainly an ingenious proposal, which takes care of all the really important financial obstacles to European appeasement. It is the result of an intensive study of the problem which Mr. Levinson made in Europe last summer, and in the preparation of it he was assisted by the training which he has obtained by his own professional work, which has frequently involved the working out of railway reorganizations. He is accustomed, that is, to the framing of plans which will satisfy the conflicting claims of different classes of creditors and enable a bankrupt concern to operate freely again on its own power and subject to its own control. He is assured by experts that his project for the liquidation of the debts is financially feasible. If it were backed by the American government and public opinion, the most dangerous obstacle to its political realization would be overcome.

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PAUL Y. Anderson, Washington correspondent of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, has raised an interesting question in regard to the Teapot Dome transaction. It will be remembered that a dummy organization, the Continental Trading Company, was created, which bought and resold to affiliated companies a large amount of oil at an advance of twenty-five cents a barrel. The "profits" on this paper transaction were invested in Liberty bonds, and some of these, to the value of $230,500, were traced to Secretary Fall and his son-in-law, M. T. Everhart. But this amount did not represent the total "earnings" of the Continental Trading Corporation. Before it went out of business it had accumulated more than $3,000,000. Mr. Anderson asks, What became of the other $2,770,000? The theory has sometimes been advanced that part of the money was used to pay off the Republican deficit of about $1,800,000 from the campaign of 1920. Will Hays, on the witness stand, denied that Harry Sinclair had turned over any stock to the Republican war-chest, but said nothing about Liberty bonds. Of the five oil men who could tell what became of the missing $2,770,000, one fled to Africa and two to Europe, and all refuse to return under any circumstances. A fourth, Sinclair, is a principal in a criminal proceeding and cannot be forced to testify. Stewart, the fifth, presumably will be a witness in the retrial of the Fall-Sinclair case. We are glad to note that Senator Norris proposes to have the Walsh committee reopen its inquiry into the matter.

ONE would suppose that the United States Department of Justice would have some interest in this question. If a $3,000,000 fund is accumulated by shady methods and $230,500 of it is used for fraudulent purposes, is it not reasonable to suppose that the rest was also spent illegitimately? Yet when Mr. Anderson applied to Attorney General Sargent, the latter displayed no interest whatever in the matter, and declined to say a word about it. No investigation is being made by the Department. The recipients of the Liberty bonds could be traced by the Treasury, through the simple process of finding out who cashed the coupons, but this is not being done. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the Coolidge administration, instead of wanting to find out where the money went, knows where it went and has a lively fear that the people of the country may come to share the information.

AS the present session of Congress opens, the lobbies are busy in Washington as they have not been for many years. We have already referred to that which supports repeal of the federal estate-tax, and has financed visits to Washington by scores of state legislators and officials. Greatly overshadowing this, however, is the lobby of the private electric-power interests, which are determined to prevent public development of power either at Muscle Shoals or Boulder Dam. This lobby boasts that it represents about twenty billion dollars in capital. It has engaged as director Mr. Stephen B. Davis, former solicitor of the Department of Commerce under Herbert Hoover. The National Electric Light Association—one of the chief constituents of the movement—has also raided the public service by engaging as its assistant director Mr. Paul S. Clapp, formerly assistant Secretary of Commerce under Mr. Hoover. Mr. Clapp has been touring the country attacking the government's plans for Boulder Dam. The Association in a resolution states that the Boulder Dam project, which has been endorsed by President Coolidge, Secretary Work, and Reclamation Commissioner Elwood Mead, is supported by "enthusiasts and fanatics." Representative Swing, one of the authors of the Swing-Johnson bill for Boulder Dam, estimates that the lobby will spend this year over $1,000,000. Its main task at present, as announced to newspaper correspondents at a dinner in Washington, "is to get Muscle Shoals out of the way and to beat Boulder Dam and the Walsh resolution." Those representing the public interest in these subjects are Lilliputians beside this giant.

ON the Tariff Commission is a "dirt farmer," Sherman J. Lowell, a past master of the National Grange. He appeared at the recent convention of the Grange in Cleveland with the solemn warning: "If we don't use the tariff to protect our farmers, every war-torn country in Europe that owes us money will be trying to make us pay their debts by intriguing us to buy their products. We must be on our guard to prevent that." This sounds like a fair sample of Republican tariff economics. It is disgraceful in the Europeans not to pay their debts to us. But it is shameful and dangerous intrigue for them to export goods to us as a means of paying. Just how does Mr. Lowell suggest that they pay? By sending us gold? There is not enough in the world. And we already have over half the world's supply of monetary gold—too much for our own good. Meanwhile, European currencies are precarious for lack of sufficient reserves. What other methods of paying are there besides sending goods or gold? By supplying us with services such as shipping and insurance, and by selling goods and services to our travelers abroad. Presumably Mr. Lowell would think the former means as heinous as export. The only recourse left is for all the members of the Grange, taking the large profits they have received from tariff protection, to spend the rest of their lives traveling abroad.

> Whereas, the number of marketing contracts so far signed by the members, old and new, of the Burley Tobacco Growers' Coöperative Association, indicates a degree of indifference which makes doubtful the securing of 75 percent of the 1926 crop by November 15, and

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> Whereas, the opening of the 1927 selling season is now only thirty days away;
>
> Therefore, be it resolved that, to protect the best interests of our membership and to provide adequate facilities for the handling and sale of their tobacco, it is ordered that work be immediately begun to put our receiving plants in order to dispose of the present crop by the looseleaf auction method.

THUS passes another farmers' coöperative marketing venture. And, of all the larger commodity coöperative societies organized during the post-war period, the Burley Growers' was probably the strongest and best-managed. It arose from conditions which were both dramatic and chaotic. A tobacco pool had existed in Kentucky as far back as 1906-7, but this ceased to exist before the recent movement of price deflation began. The new society emerged under the sponsorship of Judge Robert W. Bingham, at a time when night-riding and other means of terror were being employed by baffled farmers. Under the management of James C. Stone, an experienced and able tobacco specialist, this association seemed to flourish during the early years of the five-year contract. Now, after a strenuous campaign for securing renewal and new contracts, the directors admit failure.

DIRECTORS of the Burley Tobacco Growers' Coöperative Association have not completely abandoned hope. They persist in believing that their organization may be saved, possibly for the handling of next year's crop. However their efforts may eventuate, and we hope their expectations are not unfounded, the present crisis leads to further reflections regarding our agricultural situation as a whole. Those statesmen and business men who recommend coöperative marketing as the primary remedy for the farmers' difficulties are obviously oversimplifying the case. They presume that farmers are able somehow to become coöperative with respect to a single aspect of life while remaining individualistic in other affairs. Coöperative marketing, existing in social and economic insulation, can achieve nothing more than a temporary increase in prices for such commodities as are held in pools; when this increased price is followed by increased production, the ensuing price must come down, whether the commodity is held in the warehouses of coöperators or those of speculators. And, when the price reaches a given level, coöperative loyalty is strained to the breaking-point. This is, of course, merely one of the perplexities which confront promoters of coöperative societies. The deeper social, psychic, and cultural values which are prerequisite to a true coöperative society are, for the most part, still unrecognized. To most people, the problem still seems to be the simple discovery or invention of some smooth-running piece of marketing machinery. This economic focus produces those various blind-spots which prevent us from seeing the whole of our agricultural problem.

More Myth than Man

EVERY day it looks more and more as if, with respect to the Republican nominations for President, Mr. Coolidge were playing it both ways. He proposes to combine the credit for having refused the honor with the rare distinction of having it forced upon him. He hopes to find himself acclaimed as nominee by a chastened party and a sympathetic nation without himself asking for it, without laboring to get it and without paying any price for it. The obsequious Republicans are to hand the crown to him on a gold platter, admitting thereby that they cannot get along without him, and their helpless subservience is subsequently to be ratified by an overwhelming majority of the American people. Such appears to be Mr. Coolidge's program, which up to date has marched from one stage to another without a hitch.

Whether it will continue to succeed we shall not risk a guess, but it certainly ought to fail. If he disarms opposition and is carried into the nomination by an automatic popular tide, it will mean an emphatic personal triumph for him, but it will advertise an increasing decay in the self-confidence of the Republican party and in the health of the American political body. Mr. Coolidge has not deserved such a tribute. If he wishes to be reëlected, he is, in our opinion, fully entitled to ask his countrymen to consider his claims. He cannot, in our opinion, be properly disqualified by the tradition against a third term. Mr. Coolidge has served as President a little over five years, and once only has he been elected. The third-term taboo is no more than partially valid in a clear case, but in a doubtful case it should not, in our opinion, rule out an existing President's claim for reëlection on the merits of his performance. But while Mr. Coolidge has every right to offer himself as candidate, he should do so in the open, which is apparently what he wishes to avoid. If he had come out and asked for the nomination, he would have been obliged to fight in order to get it, but it would have been an honest fight against an organized vocal opposition and with something worth while to fight about. His present apparent program of emasculating the opposition to his renomination by refusing either to run or to withdraw is a far less worthy course. For it fatally embarrasses and partly disqualifies his most formidable competitors who have served or are serving in his Cabinet. If the Republicans connive at these tactics, they will show themselves up as an anemic and snobbish political organism with little initiative or confidence in its own resources, leaders and mission.

A Republican party which finds Mr. Coolidge indispensable as a candidate will insist on nominating him for one of two reasons. His withdrawal might conceivably provoke a contest over the selection of his successor which would become sufficiently bitter to compromise the success of the Republicans in the

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subsequent contest with their Democratic opponents. Or it might have the opposite effect. It might expose on their part the lack of any sufficient impulse to fasten upon a better substitute. In this second case, the intelligence of the party would shrink from the honest consideration of Mr. Coolidge's failure and weakness as a party leader and as President, and from the effort to select an abler and more enterprising successor. Instead of rejoicing at the opportunity for a new deal which would tap other sources of Republican energy and statesmanship, the party would prefer to succumb helplessly and snobbishly to the prestige of an obviously second-rate man and a no less obviously inept and timid leader. For the prestige which Mr. Coolidge enjoys is a spurious affair which is the result of a period of political stagnation and intellectual lassitude.

The welfare of the party and that of the interests which the party represents demands that the Republicans during the term of the next President invoke the services of an executive and a statesman with courage, initiative and vision. Mr. Coolidge's very limitations, let alone his good qualities, have during the past four years contributed to his success. His frugality, his timidity, his conservatism, his immobility, his specious and loquacious optimism have all of them comforted a people who were apprehensive about social security and surfeited for the moment with public adventures; but this state of mind is born of conditions which are passing, and it will soon disappear under the influence of the very different group of conditions which are now coming to prevail. During the next four years, the American government can no longer continue to play safe, as it has done since 1922. It will need, particularly in its relation with foreign countries, to try out more positive, more risky, more responsible and more controversial policies. Mr. Coolidge's handling of the foreign affairs of the United States has been unobjectionable, whenever American interests demanded that he sit tight and do little or nothing, but it has been maladroit whenever, as in the case of the naval conference and of our relations with Mexico and Central America, circumstances compelled him to act decisively. The years from 1928 to 1932 will be a period of decision in foreign policy. If Mr. Coolidge proves to be his own successor, he will regret his failure to retire before the buffeting of less favorable surroundings and the demand for constructive statesmanship reveal the ineptitude of his good intentions.

During the next four years, the President of the United States will have to deal with two questions of major importance which, if they are wisely but not too cautiously handled, will correct and immensely improve the relations of the United States to Europe. During that interval, the *modus vivendi* which was adopted in 1924 in relation to German reparations will break down and will have to be reconsidered. The United States can scarcely avoid playing a more responsible and official part in this reconsideration than it did in the making of the Dawes Plan. The success of any reparations will depend, among other conditions, upon its association with some plan for the prompt liquidation of the inter-Allied debts and particularly of the debt which the Allies in Europe owe to the United States. It is no exaggeration to declare that the healing of this bleeding economic and political sore without any additional infection depends upon the willingness of the American government to propose to Europe some such comprehensive solution as the ingenious and statesmanlike plan which Mr. Levinson outlines elsewhere in this issue. No less important are the negotiations which will have to be undertaken during the next few years for a revival and a modification of the naval agreement of 1921 with Japan and Great Britain. It must be remembered that this agreement involves not merely the question of future competition in naval armaments, but also the peace of the Pacific, the relation between military and naval armaments and their method of limitation, and finally, what the parity between the two English-speaking peoples in the distribution of sea power really means.

The Republican party, so it happens, contains two leaders who are peculiarly well qualified to conduct the American government through the labyrinth of difficult negotiations and doubtful decisions of the next few years, and both of them are passive or active candidates for the Republican nomination. We refer, of course, to Messrs. Hoover and Hughes. Mr. Hughes initiated and planned the group of agreements which the naval powers consummated in Washington during the fall of 1921. According to the record, he is better prepared to deal with the vexatious and complicated question of their renewal, revision and supplementation than any other candidate for the presidency, Democratic or Republican. Mr. Hoover has not for many years participated in the making of foreign policy, but he has rare qualifications for handling transactions with Europe. He understands the resources, the economic needs and the bargaining power of the European governments as does no other politically prominent American. He has the realistic intelligence, the courage, the ingenuity and the adaptability which might enable him to locate the best way out of the immensely difficult economic, political and psychological problem of liquidating the obligations which the European peoples incurred during the War. He is a man of larger ability and probably of more liberality and vision than he has had an opportunity of revealing since he entered the Republican Cabinet in March, 1921.

The New Republic is not, of course, indicating its own preference for the nomination and election of either Mr. Hughes or Mr. Hoover. It is only pointing out that, if the Republican party rejects both of them and chooses to commandeer a man like Mr. Coolidge, whose qualifications for the post are so much inferior, it will write into the record clear

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evidence of its deterioration as an organ of government. It will have succumbed to the credulity and suggestibility which its leaders have tried to impose on American public opinion. It will have fallen a victim of the foolish and baleful myth that Mr. Coolidge is somehow a great man and a superstatesman in whom the shrewdness, the kindness, the prudence and the common sense an ordinary small-town American is supposed to possess were illumined and transfigured by a touch of genius. This myth originated after his extraordinary triumph in 1924 and as an explanation of it. Only a great man could have been so overwhelmingly elected. An orgy of puffery followed. For years the press and Republican politician publicists have industriously circulated the lie. But now when Mr. Coolidge is himself chewing the husks of the myth by pretending magnanimously to retire, and when the party would like to seize the opportunity to get rid of him, the carefully cultivated puff of his eminence and his political indispensability gets in their way. Mr. Coolidge can invoke the mere inertia of the myth as a means of ruling out his competitors and of imposing himself on a party which would not overtly succumb to his pretensions without a stiff fight. The outcome is still doubtful. His competitors may, in the end, force him really to withdraw, or they may manage to interrupt the parade of his prestige, but, in any event, the lesson is obvious and important. The American presidency is an excessively powerful office. It seems irresistibly to magnify a man unwholesomely, either in his own eyes, as with Roosevelt and Wilson, or in the eyes of other people, as in the case of Coolidge.

Fooling the Farmers Again

FARMERS in the United States have for long been justly indignant at the preferences given, through the political machinery, to industrial interests. Once it was the railroads which played fast and loose with the favors received. Latterly the farmers have begun to awaken to the injustice of a protective tariff for manufactures which is ineffective as far as farm products are concerned. Hence the McNary-Haugen Bill, *et al.* What has made the sense of injustice doubly sore is that much of the special privilege handed over to industry has resulted from fooling the farmers. They are potentially strong enough in politics to prevent almost any step of which they vehemently disapprove. But political leaders, misrepresenting issues to them, have time and again obtained their support, or at least their passive assent, for measures injurious to themselves. Then it has taken years of agitation, organization and effort even partially to undo the wrongs done. And much of the injustice is irremediable.

As we write, the American Farm Bureau Federation is meeting for its convention in Chicago. This is the national organization which has been in the van of the fight for the McNary-Haugen Bill—an expedient of dubious efficacy for remedying a wrong suffered by the farmers for many years past. No doubt, the sessions will be dominated by discussion of this and similar measures for farm relief. At the same time, however, there is serious danger that the Federation, on the advice of its own leaders, will give assent to a policy on an entirely different subject, the baneful effects of which the farmers will be suffering, and vainly trying to remedy, fifty years from now. Unless the farmers are wary, they will be fooled again, and in as important a matter as any which has risen to plague them in the past.

We refer to electric power in general, and to Muscle Shoals in particular. In a world increasingly mechanized, the battle for markets, depending largely on efficiency of production, will go in the end to those who are able to utilize power to the best advantage. The uses of electric power in agriculture are day by day growing in importance. Aside from mere mechanical labor saving, abundant and cheap electricity contributes to the ease and pleasure of life which is necessary to enable the farmers to compete with urban employers even for the help of their own children. We venture to say that within a quarter of a century the difference between favorable and unfavorable power conditions will mean far more to American farmers than tariff discrimination ever did.

Now, it has been attested by every impartial investigator into the subject that private power interests practise marked discrimination against the individual consumer—against the farmer especially—and in favor of industry. This discrimination is most noticeable in the matter of rates. It also exists in the extension of distributing lines. Furthermore, the power interests are extracting abnormally large profits from the entire public by virtue of valuations of their plants, on which their "reasonable return" is reckoned, far above the actual cost of the investment. Regulation of private power companies has broken down in numerous directions. The case against the existing system is so strong that many believe in complete public ownership for the utility. But, at the very least, it is desirable to have a few large publicly owned power systems to compete with the private companies and check their practices. By the same token, the private power interests are stretching every nerve to prevent the public from owning or managing any plant of real importance.

In the present Congress, two decisive battles of this campaign are to be fought. The more important, Boulder Dam, has such characteristics that the power interests will be hard put to it to show reason against allowing the government at least the right to develop its own power, which will result from the fundamental flood control project. But they hope to establish a precedent against public

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power, by first prevailing upon Congress to turn over the government's Muscle Shoals property to a private company. And the first step in this effort is to secure the support of the American Farm Bureau Federation and similar bodies. Strangely enough, the Federation seems about to fall in line, by endorsing the bid of the American Cyanamid Company.

How are the farmers to be prevailed upon thus to betray their own best interests? By the old process of fooling them. The importance of Muscle Shoals as a producer of power is being under-emphasized. But farm leaders are persuaded to believe that it can produce an abundance of cheap fertilizer by making nitrates from the air. The Cyanamid Company promises, if it gains control of Muscle Shoals, to make fertilizers and sell them at the cost of production plus 8 percent. A committee of three farm editors, deputed by the American Agricultural Editors' Association to investigate the situation, is reported to have been so impressed by this offer that they will support the company's bid. We are happy to say that a prominent farm journal, not represented on the committee—Farm and Fireside—has hastened to expose the intended fraud on the farmers by repeating again the facts known to all experts, facts which have previously been published in the New Republic.

The facts are that, even if fertilizer is produced at Muscle Shoals and is offered for sale at the cost of production plus 8 percent, it will not be of the slightest benefit to the farmers, for the simple reason that the farmers will not buy it. They will not buy it, because they will be able to obtain equally good nitrate fertilizer made elsewhere, and by different processes, at a much cheaper price. Muscle Shoals was developed by the federal government during the War, when the process of nitrogen fixation was in its infancy, partly in order to obtain a source of nitrates, whose import had been seriously restricted. Two nitrate plants were built. Plant No. 1, it is agreed by all, is now so antiquated as to be completely useless. Plant No. 2 was designed for the cyanamid process. This plant was well located at the water power development, because the process demands a large amount of power. But since its building, another process has been perfected—the synthetic ammonia process—which is much cheaper. This demands much less power, but more coal. There is no synthetic ammonia plant at Muscle Shoals, and the location is not desirable for such a plant. The Allied Chemical and Dye Corporation, for instance, which uses the new process, and announces its intention to produce fixed nitrogen "in quantities sufficiently large to enable the United States eventually to be independent of importation of these products as units of fertilizers," has definitely abandoned consideration of Muscle Shoals for the purpose. It says: "The economics, as to location and technical process, at Muscle Shoals not proving of interest, the company has acquired a large acreage, accessible to both rail and deep-water carriers, at Hopewell, Va., for the location of the first installation." This plant is already in course of construction.

The U. S. Department of Agriculture, in its Yearbook for 1926, reports: "This product [of the cyanamid process] has found considerable use as a fertilizer, but certain undesirable properties have definitely limited its consumption. The synthetic ammonia process is the newest method and it has . . . contributed most to the growth of the nitrogen fixation industry as a whole. . . . The United States, which five years ago had no plants for the fixation of atmospheric nitrogen, now has seven synthetic-ammonia installations." According to the Department's figures, production of nitrogen by the cyanamid process increased from 100,000 metric tons to 170,000, or 70 percent, between 1915 and 1925, while by the synthetic ammonia process it increased during the same period from 25,000 to 400,000 tons, or 1,600 percent.

The farmers would do well to consult the abundant technical opinion on this subject, which may be found in testimony appearing in the Congressional Record and elsewhere. If they do, they will come to the conclusion that any offer to produce fertilizer at Muscle Shoals is a delusion and a snare. There is no profit to be made in producing fertilizer at Muscle Shoals; the only purpose in any such offer must be to fool the farmers into supporting a scheme for exploiting the great electric power resources of the development. Muscle Shoals should be treated solely as a problem in power.

If the farmers want to dispose of this government power by intrusting it to private hands, they can do much better than to give it to the Cyanamid Company—other power companies have offered more favorable contracts for it. But they would be well advised if they kept the plant in the hands of the government. For this is the first and possibly the crucial issue in a struggle for power which will vitally affect the future of American agriculture.

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A Financial Path to Peace

THIS is an attempt to suggest a comprehensive plan of readjustment for the vexing questions of German reparations, Allied and inter-Allied government debts, European appeasement and peace.

Many excellent suggestions of readjustment have been made, but, so far as the writer knows, they deal respectively with only one phase of the European situation. Sometimes it is with the settlement and disposition of German reparations; sometimes with the resettlement or cancellation of the Allied debts owing the United States; sometimes the emphasis is put upon the necessity for revising the Treaty of Versailles; and, of course, many plans deal purely with the question of world peace. *The central idea of this proposal is to consider all of these acute questions and problems together;* in other words, to handle them as is done, generally speaking, in the case of a reorganization of a distressed railroad or industrial corporation. In reorganizations, *all* interests are considered in one complete scheme of rehabilitation and adjustment. The analogy may not be complete, but it is sufficiently so for the purpose. When every nation sees what all other nations are to receive, how it is to be treated, and what the general result will be, criticism and distrust are disarmed, and general confidence and harmony are attainable. This is the "open diplomacy" of reorganizations.

Settlements have been made by our government with practically all our European debtors except France, which has not ratified the agreement. This article does not discuss the wisdom of these settlements, but takes them as facts in the economic problem. However, it may not be amiss to say that the writer has never been in sympathy with the view that the Great War was originally our war, that we were military partners with the Allies throughout, and that our loans to them during and after the War were mere contributions to a common cause. Nor has the writer ever considered the effort to fix the "capacity to pay" of a nation over a period of sixty-two years anything short of a wild guess. But the settlements are closed incidents, and we start from them as a base. Suffice it to say that the United States has been liberal in these adjustments, although we have apparently received little or no credit for generosity or even leniency.

In 1917 we entered the World War, not only in good faith but enthusiastically, "to end war," that is, to establish durable world peace. While we materially aided in victory for the Allied cause, the vision of world peace is still distant.

The purposes of the proposed plan may be summarized as follows:

1. To get a reasonable compromise in cash for the United States of the "present worth" of the debt settlements, which will furnish immediate and substantial relief to our taxpayers who are bearing the whole brunt of the American cost of the War.

2. To have the German reparations fixed at a definite amount and paid, the amount to be financed by a world consortium of bankers in coöperation with the governments involved, so that Germany may pay adequate reparations and also be able to work out the economic salvation of her people.

3. To use the proceeds of the financed fixation of German reparations to pay all the sums needed under the proposed plan to bring about the settlement and discharge of all the Allied and inter-Allied government debts; for stabilization of currencies; for equitable adjustments with those European nations having specific claims to German reparations, and for the necessary cost of the loan.

4. The nations involved to sign a treaty of peace, open to all other civilized nations, wherein there will be substituted for the sixty-two years of debt instalment payments by our European debtors a sixty-two-year experiment in world peace, by the renunciation for that period of the use of war for the settlement of international disputes. In other words, to get also from this adjustment the ideal for which we fought in the War—the ending of war by international agreement.

5. To make such modifications of the Treaty of Versailles as are compatible with the terms and purposes of this proposal.

The position taken by President Wilson, that the question of Allied debts should not be considered in conjunction with German reparations, was sound. This view was approved and adopted by the Harding and Coolidge administrations. At the time this subject was originally broached, it meant two things —first, the making of all payments by the Allies to the United States conditional on the payment to them of reparations by Germany; and, secondly, and more important, the United States was asked to take, in payment of the Allied debts, German "C" bonds, third mortgage bonds, all subordinated to the bonds to be given the Allies. This would have put the United States in the position of military collector of reparations from Germany, in order to protect our third mortgage bonds, as we would have released the Allies. The proposal herein contained is free from these objections. In fact, the plan provides a complete settlement, wherein the United States would be paid a fair "present worth" compromise of the debt settlements in cash, the reparations would be adjusted and discharged, and the whole network of Allied and inter-Allied indebtedness would be disentangled and ended.

The principal of the Allied debts owing the United States was about ten billion dollars, which, with accumulated interest, amounted to about twelve billion dollars. By the lenient settlements made by our debt-funding commission and approved by Con-

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gress (including the unratified French settlement), between six and seven billion dollars were, in effect, cancelled, through the omission and reduction of interest over the period of sixty-two years. The "present worth" of the debts owing the United States under the settlements (that is, the present cash value an expert accountant would give them, assuming that all the instalments will be paid for the sixty-two years) is, roughly, five billion dollars. The cancellation of six to seven billion dollars, plus the "present worth" of about five billion dollars, epitomizes the present Allied debt situation so far as the United States is concerned. Of course, it requires considerable optimism to believe that all these countries will continue to pay their instalments to us over the sixty-two-year period.

Even if the nations actually and punctually pay all their instalments, the present generation of our taxpayers will get an almost negligible benefit. For, under these settlements, the instalment payments, and most of the interest rates, do not begin to be substantial until about twenty-five years from now. But it has been computed that, at the present rate of progress, our own eighteen billion dollars of government debt will all be paid off within twenty-five years. Therefore, the next generation, that will get the benefit of the increased instalment payments and interest rates, will be a generation that nationally is practically free from debt. In other words, American taxpayers will get relief when they do not need relief. There is no good reason why the present generation should stand *all* the burden of our participation in the War. The proposed plan offers immediate and partial relief to present taxpayers, and, even so, will accelerate by many years the day when our national war debt will be entirely paid off.

In addition to the debt settlements, the United States has a claim of two hundred and fifty million dollars, arising out of our contribution to the Army of Occupation immediately following the Armistice. We were to have a first lien for these advances, but, for some reason or other, we have not been paid, so far as the writer knows, anything either on principal or interest. As the other governments contributing to the Army of Occupation have been paid, it seems reasonable to propose that this expense of the United States, which was incurred for the benefit of the Allies, and after the War, should be repaid.

While, as above stated, the United States happily kept itself free from participation in or collection of German reparations, nevertheless, in any "reorganization" of Europe, we must all agree that the center and crux are the German reparations. This is obviously true so far as any financial adjustment is concerned, and it is almost equally true with regard to European appeasement and peace. Accordingly, this plan proposes that the German reparations be fixed at the amount of six billion dollars, and that this amount be financed and paid in cash in a lump sum. This would supersede the present method of instalment payments by Germany without knowledge or fixation of the total amount of reparations, and, as the annual payments under the Dawes Plan are rapidly increasing, would obviate the danger of default and consequent serious complications. The effect of the cash settlement of the reparations would be to terminate the quasi-receivership now afflicting Germany, and she would owe six billion dollars under a well secured loan, handled by a world banking consortium working in concert with the governments involved, on a sound and economic basis. As the loan would be a first mortgage on all the national assets and revenues of Germany, the interest rate should be, say, 5½ percent per annum, with a sinking fund of an additional 1½ percent per annum, or at a total annual cost of 7 percent. This sinking fund of 1½ percent, kept alive, would, as banking tables show, automatically pay off the entire principal of the loan in about twenty-eight years.

Such a loan would, as stated, have to be undertaken by an international banking group in coöperation with the governments involved. Our American bankers would, doubtless, be willing to underwrite and distribute a proper and proportionate share of the loan. The financial task would, of course, be colossal, but far from impossible, with the momentum of public approval and consequent investment. It would, indeed, be a reassuring revelation if a loan of such magnitude, easily possible in war-time, when loans are necessarily precarious, could be negotiated in peace-time, for constructive purposes, when the safety of the loan is beyond question.

Under the proposed plan, the United States government would receive in cash, out of the proceeds of the new German loan, four billion two hundred and fifty million dollars. The four billion dollars represent the "present worth" cash compromise of the Allied debt settlements. Otherwise stated, we would accept in compromise of the five billion dollars, which is the estimated "present worth" of the debt settlements, 80 percent thereof in immediate cash—a discount of 20 percent. The two hundred and fifty million dollars would be repayment of the principal of our contribution to the Army of Occupation. The four billion dollars of cash could be used immediately in reduction of our own national debt, and, by the time of its consummation, would probably mean a reduction of 25 percent thereof. This large reduction in our national debt, quite independently of surpluses, would justify an immediate and substantial reduction in our federal taxes. The two hundred and fifty million dollars could be utilized, if so desired, by Congress, in whole or in part, as an appropriation for farm relief under satisfactory legislation.

The plan also provides that there be a general cleaning up and discharge of the Allied and inter-Allied war debt all around. The United States is

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the only clear creditor, we having paid our way as we went along in the War. Great Britain is a creditor as to her other Allies, but is a debtor to the United States in the sum of about four and a half billion dollars. As a part of this proposal, Great Britain would be called upon to cancel the debts owing to her by her Allies—about seven billion dollars. In turn, she would receive a release from the United States as to her own debt. This, in effect, Great Britain has heretofore offered to do.

Under this proposal, there would be no need of continued friction or even conference about the French debt settlement. All the debts would be settled and discharged, including France's. Disregarding the effect of the settlements, France owes us over four billion dollars, including four hundred million dollars for materials purchased after the War, and she owes nearly three billion dollars to Great Britain; Italy owes us over two billion dollars, and a similar amount to Great Britain; Belgium owes us four hundred and twenty millions; Rumania, forty-five millions; Czechoslovakia, one hundred and fifteen millions; Latvia, six millions; Finland, nine millions; Poland, one hundred and seventy-eight millions; Greece, about twenty millions; Esthonia, fourteen millions; and Lithuania, six millions. And these latter countries also owe similarly large amounts to Great Britain. Thus most of the countries in Europe would have a direct financial stake in this general adjustment.*

The two hundred million dollars borrowed by Germany to inaugurate the Dawes Plan should be paid off out of the six billion dollars, so that the new loan would be an absolute first mortgage on all of Germany's national property. This would leave a balance of five billion eight hundred million dollars. The payment to the United States of four billion two hundred and fifty million dollars would leave a balance of one billion five hundred and fifty million dollars. This balance would be available, as far as needed, for stabilization of currencies, for equitable adjustments with those European nations having specific claims to German reparations, and for the necessary cost of the loan. The unused portion, if any, of the one billion five hundred and fifty million dollars to be applied in reduction of the loan.

As a part of the general appeasement, the European nations involved, as well as the United States, are to sign a general treaty in which the use of war for the settlement of international disputes would be renounced for the next sixty-two years, as an international experiment in world peace. The other civilized nations to be invited to join in this treaty, so that for the period of sixty-two years the institution of war as a method of settling the disputes of the nations may be outlawed, and a judicial system set up in place of the destructive war system which has brought Europe to its present plight. Thus the European nations, instead of enduring sixty-two years of "financial servitude," would enjoy sixty-two years of voluntary peace, during which time their economic rehabilitation could be effected and made secure. If, toward the end of the sixty-two-year period, the experiment in peace proves distasteful to the civilized nations, and they hunger for military power, they could revive the war system by refusing to extend the term of the peace treaty beyond the sixty-two years.

Such a treaty would make possible and desirable the provision of this plan, which calls for a world conference on the reduction of armaments, both on land and sea, to signalize the general renunciation of war. For so long as the institution of war is retained by the nations as their lawful and paramount "court of last resort," all hopes of disarmament are doomed to disappointment. But, with war renounced for sixty-two years, all obstacles to drastic disarmament would be removed, and the economic convalescence and rehabilitation of the countries of Europe would ensue by leaps and bounds.

It is obvious that, in order to carry out the foregoing plan, changes would have to be made in the Treaty of Versailles in accordance therewith, and such other changes as may be agreed upon, in harmony with the spirit and compact of the nations to live together in amity and peace and to devote themselves to the progress and welfare of their respective peoples.

This proposal is not submitted as a finality nor as having the magic of an Aladdin's lamp. The writer will be both surprised and disappointed if many important and beneficent suggestions and amendments are not forthcoming; and he will be abundantly repaid if this proposal stimulates or aids, in any way, a better plan of European adjustment and peace.

The following is a summary of this plan:

SUMMARY

World Loan to Germany		$6,000,000,000
Interest rate 5½ percent per annum		
Sinking fund 1½ percent per annum		
(Sinking fund, kept alive, will pay off entire principal in twenty-eight years.)		
Pay off lien of Dawes Plan reparation loan		200,000,000
		$5,800,000,000
Pay U. S. in compromise and discharge of all war debts owing to her	$4,000,000,000	
Pay U. S. in repayment of cost of American Army of Occupation 1919 and 1920	250,000,000	
		$4,250,000,000
Balance		$1,550,000,000

*For obvious reasons, the writer has left out all consideration of the Russian debts. Personally, he would like to see them incorporated, if it can be done without friction and, therefore, without endangering the proposal.

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This balance of $1,550,000,000 to be used for stabilization of currencies, for equitable adjustments with European nations having specific claims to German reparations, and for the neccessary cost of the loan. The unused balance, if any, to be applied in reduction of the loan.

Great Britain to cancel all debts owing to her by her allies, amounting to about seven billion dollars, so that all Allied and inter-Allied government debts will be wiped out.

The nations to sign a general treaty renouncing war as a method of settling their disputes for the next sixty-two years, and agreeing to set up a judicial system to supplant the outworn and destructive war system, as an epoch-making experiment in world peace.

Drastic limitation of armaments, both land and sea, through a conference of all nations based on the sixty-two-year treaty outlawing war.

Treaty of Versailles to be modified in accordance with the needs and spirit of the foregoing proposal.

S. O. LEVINSON.

Soil Waste and the Flood Menace

THE Mississippi River, with its tributaries, drains an area of 1,250,000 square miles of land—over one-half of the entire United States. The best agricultural land of the country is included in this area; in fact, it is the agricultural heart of America. Last spring, all the tributaries, except the Ohio, poured their flood waters into the main stream at the same time. As a result, 20,000 square miles of the lowlands, including 12,800,000 acres of agricultural lands, were inundated. Damage, estimated from $200,000,000 to $1,000,000,000, resulted. The flood left in its wake devastated farms and homesteads, and badly damaged towns and villages. Over 700,000 people were rendered homeless, and many were deprived of their means of livelihood.

The Mississippi flood was not the result of some sudden catastrophe such as a tidal wave, or the sudden activity of a dormant volcano. The Mississippi flood of 1927 is simply another manifestation of a condition which is slowly, insidiously leading to a disaster for American agriculture the magnitude of which will make the present one pale into insignificance. Of course, the immediate need of the hour was relief for the sufferers from the flood. The second most pressing need is rehabilitation: farmers must be reëstablished on their farms, and towns and villages reconstructed. But after these steps have been taken, the important question of flood prevention must be seriously undertaken by the federal government. Before this should be undertaken, a clear conception of the conditions which cause the floods must be realized.

Out of the maze of conflicting suggestions made for flood control on the Mississippi, four methods may be segregated as worthy of serious consideration. These are:

> (1) The construction of bigger and better levees; (2) the construction of spillways so as to relieve the main stream in time of flood; (3) the construction of reservoirs for holding the waters on the upper reaches of the tributaries; (4) the reforestation of the lands on the head-waters of the streams so as to prevent a too rapid run-off during the early spring, resulting from the thawing snow and the early spring rains.

The school for the control of the river by levees has perhaps the strongest following and most eminent support. The Mississippi River Commission, in 1879, soon after its organization, announced its support of this theory of control in the following statement: "An alluvial stream using a channel of its own formation, when confined between levees, would bore out a channel large enough to accommodate any flood that it might be called to carry." On this basis, for more than fifty years the Mississippi River Commission have been constructing levees along the Mississippi, at very great expense. And the flood of the spring of 1927 is the largest and most disastrous in history! And yet, Secretary Hoover and Brigadier General Jadwin, in a recent report, say that "levees are the practical, feasible, and economical means of affording flood protection for the valley as a whole," and the army engineers' plan, just announced, puts its main reliance upon them, and upon a few spillways.

The establishment of reservoirs on the head-waters of the various streams does not seem to offer any basis for hope of control. The magnitude of the reservoirs needed would be so large, and the value of the land which would be submerged so great, as to prevent their construction.

None of these three methods of control takes into consideration the fundamental cause of the flood condition. Nor is the deforestation of the upper reaches of the various streams in the Mississippi drainage area alone the cause of the serious floods of the past fifty years.

The lower valley of the Mississippi was being settled from about 1810 until 1850. In the early days of the settlement, floods like last spring's are not recorded. It is true that the De Soto party, in 1543, encountered the Mississippi at the flood stage, and after De Soto's death and burial in the Mississippi, the remainder of the party had difficulty in continuing their exploration, until the floods subsided. The flood of 1849 inundated large areas of uninhabited swamp land. Floods also occurred in 1874, 1876, 1882, 1890, 1896, 1897, 1903, 1912, 1913, and 1922. During the flood of 1882, the Mississippi rose to 14.9 feet at New Orleans. In 1922, it rose to 21.3 feet. (These figures are

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heights above the Gulf level.) In 1927, the flood stage reached the highest level recorded. According to estimates of engineers on the ground, it would have gone to twenty-four feet had the levee below the city not been dynamited. According to best available information, the floods of the Mississippi are increasing in frequency and intensity.

What is the cause of this condition? There must be some factor or factors which are contributing to the frequency of the floods. Has there been a series of unusual wet seasons? Is the flood condition because the wooded areas of the upper valley have been denuded of their timber and thus are not able to retain the flood waters so easily? Or is there some other factor not generally realized, which is slowly contributing to the ever-increasing menace of the flooded regions?

In order to devise a sound method of flood control, it is necessary to have a clear conception of the conditions which have brought about the floods of recent years. Wherein are conditions in the Mississippi drainage area different from what they were 125 years ago? Are the floods of recent years due entirely to the destruction of the forests on the upper reaches of the tributaries of the Mississippi River? And, if so, must we wait for protection against future floods thirty to fifty years for trees to grow, even after a policy of reforestation has been established? Will reforestation of the area where the forests have been destroyed solve the problem? *Much of the area drained by the Mississippi never had forests of any kind.*

There is no accurate statistical information regarding the amount of land originally in forest and grass on the Mississippi and its tributaries. In his report on the lands of the arid region in 1879 Major J. W. Powell recommended that the lands of the public domain be classified as agricultural, pasture, timber and mineral. This was one of the duties assigned to the Geological Survey when it was established in 1879; but the appropriations made to the survey were so meager that this was never carried out. Secretary Ballinger repeated Powell's recommendations in 1907, and the recommendation was again made by the National Conservation Congress in 1908, but, so far, this information has not been made available.

The Mississippi drainage basin, however, includes all the prairies and the Great Plains regions where forests were non-existent. It is true that the western slopes of the Alleghanies on the headwaters of the Ohio were forested. In the flood of 1927, however, the Ohio River played no part, as it did not reach the flood stage. *Deforestation alone, therefore, cannot account for the flood situation.*

There is a single condition effective over the whole drainage area of the Mississippi which is vitally different now from what existed 125 years ago, and is fundamentally the basic cause contributing to the flood situation on the Mississippi River today. Land in the Mississippi drainage area is now largely under cultivation, whereas then it was under sod. For example, in Iowa and Illinois, 85 percent of the entire area is now improved farm land. As a result, soil erosion is taking place at an alarming rate.

When white men first visited the drainage basin of the Mississippi, the entire land area was covered either with trees or grass. The brush of the forests, and the roots of the trees and grass, held the soil firmly in place and formed an ideal absorption medium for the snows of winter and rains of spring and summer. The waters from the melting snows and rains of spring were absorbed, and only slowly found their way into the streams. The decay of the accumulated grass roots of the centuries created the black soil of the prairies. When the white man occupied this area, the forest was cut down and the sod was broken up by the plow. The rich, black, absorptive soil which had taken eons of ages to create began slowly to wash away. When it rains, the run-off is now rapid and destructive. The entire top soil is now gone from hundreds of thousands of acres of what was formerly good farm land.

The lesson of the recent Mississippi flood is not bigger and better levees. The important lesson which should be realized is that the faulty system of agriculture in the Mississippi drainage basin does not permit the soils to hold the rainfall as of yore, but lets the soil slip slowly away to the sea. What is urgently needed is a full realization of this condition and the establishment of a system of agriculture which will prevent a rapid run-off when it rains and *also save the soil for future use.*

It is, perhaps, difficult for the layman to realize that the soil is so easily lost by erosion. In fact, many believe with one writer that "The soil is the one indestructible, immutable asset that the nation possesses. It is the one resource that cannot be exhausted, that cannot be used up." The soil, from an agricultural point of view, is the upper plowed surface of the soil, varying in depth from a few inches to a foot, which has taken ages of time to create from the disintegrated rock. Beneath this life-giving soil is the subsoil, which is only slowly converted into soil, and only at the expense of thousands of years' time.

Since the floods on the Mississippi are directly related to the erosion of the soil on the upper reaches of the river, it is of the utmost importance to consider methods of prevention of soil erosion as a means of adequate flood control. Soil erosion is of two kinds: gully erosion, which is local, easily observed and spectacular; and sheet erosion, which is insidious and widely distributed. Whenever it rains on cultivated soils, there is danger of loss of the soil by erosion. The prevailing practice of corn growing in the Mississippi Valley has as much to do with the floods of the river as all other factors combined. It has been estimated that four inches of

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the corn-belt soil has been removed by erosion within the past one hundred years.

On side hills, the run-off may be prevented and the soil saved, by a system of terracing. Terracing is simply the construction of ridges of soil following the contour of the land so as to check the flow of water. Contour plowing also is of value in this connection. When the plow furrow follows the contour of the land, conditions are not favorable for the formation of rivulets which later may develop into gullies. Terracing and contour cultivation are devices which have been practised for centuries in older countries where the problem of soil erosion had to be met. They have proved to be of only temporary value and doubtful expediency. These devices for checking soil erosion and destructive floods have been practised for centuries by the cultivators in China, India and South America, and the result has largely been a failure. People who practised these methods of checking soil erosion in South America thousands of years ago are now missing, and the very names of the nations are even forgotten.

In the United States, as our land became worn out, we have solved the problem by moving on to a new area. But new land is no longer available, and the recurring damage from flood brings us face to face with the problem of preventing soil erosion, which must now be solved if we are to survive as a nation. The problem of worn-out lands is not a minor one, nor is it concerned only with the actual loss of fertility of the soil. It means, in reality, the actual disappearance of the soil itself by gully and sheet erosion.

There is not much definite information regarding the amount of land which was once cultivated in this region, but which is now waste land. Shaler says on this point, "In the state of Kentucky, which has been occupied by our people for less than one hundred and fifty years, and has not been, to any considerable extent, tilled for more than a century, something like a tenth of its tillable area has passed through this process of soil destruction, and at least a thirtieth part of it cannot be brought back to its original fertility in any foreseeable time." Chamberline says that "the 1,000,000,000 or more tons of richest soil matter annually carried into the sea by our rivers is the nation's loss."

The National Conservation Congress, on the basis of estimates from 30,000 farms, calculates that 16,597 square miles of farm land have been abandoned in the United States due to soil erosion. This area is equal to the entire cultivated area of England. The run-off from it is now very abundant and takes place quickly. Deep gullies now prevail over large areas which were formerly good farm land. Sheet erosion is even now very active in the comparatively level corn-belt soil, and is promoted by the finely divided clay soil and the clean cultivation practised in corn culture.

What can be done about it? In a state of nature, soil erosion was checked and the danger from flood reduced by growth of trees and prairie grass. If floods on the Mississippi are to be permanently checked, forests must be reëstablished where they grew before, and our agricultural practice in the drainage basin must be changed so as to grow more sod-producing crops.

Corn is the great staple cattle feed of the United States. Over 90 percent of the corn produced is used for feeding cattle. Must we give up the production of corn, and consequently, the production of beef-cattle and hogs, which is the basis of American agriculture?

The practice of growing corn on much of the land in the corn belt must be abandoned, both as a means of saving the soil and also as a measure of flood control on the river itself. Except as the destruction of a tradition dear to the hearts of many people, this will not produce a serious situation at all, for there are available substitute crops which will not only conserve the soil itself and actually increase its production capacity, but also produce feed that will maintain a greater number of livestock per acre.

The crops are alfalfa and sweet clover. Alfalfa is the premier sod-forming and king of forage crops. Sweet clover is an excellent pasture crop and, more than any other crop opens up the soil, makes it porous and thus increases its capacity to hold water. These crops are thoroughly established in the Far West and their value fully appreciated, but they are not yet extensively grown in the corn belt. Alfalfa for hay and sweet clover for pasture will save the soil, prevent a too rapid run-off, and thus check floods and also produce the necessary livestock needed by the American people. Alfalfa hay will furnish more feed per acre for livestock than will corn. The ten-year average yield of corn in Illinois, for example, is thirty-five bushels per acre, or 2,100 pounds of feed. The ten-year average yield of alfalfa hay is two and nine-tenths tons per acre, or 5,800 pounds of feed. The feed produced by an acre of alfalfa will support two and one-half times the number of livestock supported by an acre of corn. These crops can be established within one year's time, and we need not wait thirty to fifty years for them to become effective, as is the case with the reëstablishment of a forest. Without the substitution of alfalfa and sweet clover for corn, we shall, in the very near future, have neither the livestock nor the soil, but only the ever-present danger of disastrous floods.

The Mississippi-flood problem is not an isolated incident characteristic of the American continent. The problem produced by the Mississippi is analogous to that which has confronted the people of China for thousands of years, in connection with the control of the flood waters of the Yellow River, the Hwang-ho, well named "China's Sorrow."

For at least forty centuries, the Chinese have

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been trying to control the Hwang-ho as we are now trying to control the Mississippi. They, also, cut down the forests and cultivated the soil on the upper reaches of the river. When the rains came, the soils washed away. Rills became rivulets and rivulets became streams which produced gullies, and the soil moved out into the Yellow Sea via the Gulf of Pe-Chih-li. This was due not only to the deforestation of the hills, but also to the clean cultivation of the soil for the production of human food. The type of soil along the Hwang-ho is loess, a wind-formed soil, thousands of feet in depth, easily susceptible to water erosion. Hundreds of square miles of land once farmed in the interior of China, on the head-waters of the Hwang-ho, is now a desolate waste which produces neither forest, grass nor food. The alluvial plain at the mouth of the Hwang-ho is built out for hundreds of miles by soil from the interior. New farms were constructed on the alluvial plain as it rose from the sea through the thousands of years of time.

The Chinese have, from time immemorial, built levees on the banks of the Hwang-ho, as we are now doing on the Mississippi, in an effort to control the flood water. They attempted to control the meandering of the river over the alluvial plains by confining the river to "a channel of its own formation," as the Mississippi River Commission commenced to do in 1879. The levees have been built higher and higher throughout the centuries. The river bed, however, rises about one foot a hundred years, due to the deposition of the silt which it carries. The bottom of the Hwang-ho is now about twenty feet above the level of the surrounding country. The river is really running on a ridge. When the levee breaks, as it does in time of floods, the terror, suffering and desolation in the plains are inconceivable. There is no question but that this condition on the Hwang-ho is an important cause contributing to the periodic famines which occur in China.

Does not the experience of the Chinese with the Hwang-ho convey to us a warning and a lesson? In America we have put a check on the wanton destruction of the forests. We have built levees as the Chinese have done. But our agricultural practice in the corn belt has not changed, as it must do if the Mississippi River is not to be a constant menace to the people of the entire Valley, and become for us another "river of sorrow." For two generations, the people of the lower Valley of the Mississippi have fought and suffered, buoyed up by the hope that, when the levee system was finished, all would be well and they would be safe. In the light of four thousand years' experience of the Chinese on the Yellow River, this feeling is not justified. Levees and spillways must be used. But reforestation and a decided change in the agricultural practice in the corn-belt area must take place before safety for all may be obtained.

ROBERT STEWART.

Alfred the Near-Great

THEY say in Woppington that Dr. Horner is beginning to show his age. His life of devoted labor as a physician and his years of bitter suffering as a Democrat have levied toll upon his once robust frame. Yet it seemed to Elmer Durkin on this raw November night that his old friend walked with a firmer step than usual as he entered the news-store and asked in a clear voice for a packet of little cigars.

"What's the glad news, Doc?" asked the vendor of our two popular narcotics.

It wasn't news exactly, the physician explained as he dropped into a stoveside seat, but an era of good feeling arising from current political events.

"The other fellows are doing the squabbling this time. It looks as if we had a chance."

"I pin the tin on you Democrats for the record non-stop hope," said Elmer. "Still, if you put your best hoof forward——"

"Governor Smith," declared the physician, "is a great man."

"Or, anyhow, near-great."

"He'd make a fine President."

"When, as and if," said Elmer. "Mebbe so. On Yorkstate stuff he sure knows his Bermudas and he'll always step up to the mike and give us the lowdown, but on national issues he's noisy like a Little Neck. How would he stack up on foreign affairs, or does he know foreigners have any? If he's spilled anything it hasn't hit my pink ears. What's his hunch on taxation, farm relief, army and navy, or what have you? By me; I'm not one of Bill Burns' dicks. Silent Al! Doc, I'm awful fed up on that deaf and dumb stuff. I'm getting where I'd rather see them gabby than flabby.

"Even on the hooch question he's buttoned up his pan tight. It wouldn't knock me horizontal if he slipped the boys the gag, 'I do not choose to rum in 1928.' Prexy Smith would probably support the Volstead Act in the style to which it is accustomed—if that's anything to write home about. He'd park those twelve-minute eggs from Fourteenth Street where they wouldn't gum up the scenery and he'd stage a big smelly zoo in the back yard. We're due to have a Catholic President just to prove that religious freedom isn't a wise crack. Al would be a bear at the desk after he wised himself up some, he'd be as honest as the job allows and he'd make a noise like a human being instead of an ice box. And that pretty near lets him out."

"The people of New York——"

"Sure, I know, Doc. He's a riot there and still clicking sweet on all six. Take those amendments in the last election. Was that a sketch? He slipped the K. O. on one and the O. K. on the rest and the devoters yessed him hearty—city slickers, apple knockers and all. On the dope, New York is a Republican state, but the G. O. P. bosses have

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about as much say-so these days as the King of the Wops. When young T. R. spilled some snooty thoughts about the Almighty Alfred, he got shushed by his own bunch from Ogdensburg to Yaphank. If they could only doll up the Constitution so New York had the answer, Al could be the big cheese of the universe.

"But outside of New York it's different, and the outsider you go the differenter it gets. The drys deplore him, the Kluckies hate-hymn him and the anti-Tammany peeves hand him the pickle eye. Besides which there are lots of mossy ones out in the sticks who think any burg with more than 257 people is Sodom, unless it's Gomorrah. They don't flop for this Oliver Street hooey at all.

"Another thing, Doc, the Demmys are a home talent troop. They're not so rah rah in the Electoral College, but a lot of them swing cushy jobs in District Number One. These sandlot statesmen would rather plant their dogs on a soft desk in the Court House than play a long shot on Washington. That's how come they don't cuddle to this insomnia from Albany. They're jerry that this baby is the best seller in the near east, but they'd rather kick in for another picture postal like John W. Whosis than risk getting pried loose from that free chow. They're against Al on principle —or, anyway, interest.

"You'd think a guy with so many hurdles to take was sunk, but he's getting all the breaks. The November elections edged over to the wetward, even in Ohio, where they invented thirst. I lamp in the paper where some Dixie Coca Cola squad went into a huddle and said maybe we'd better slip the ball to Smithy this time and let him get crippled for life. When they alibi like that, it's a pipe they see the scribbling on the kalsomine. The dirt is that the corn pone belt is not so hipped on national prohibition any more. It wouldn't cramp them any to go back to the good old days when the rum fiend was chased by a home-cured scion with a goatee and a string tie and not so color blind as these Yank Republicans.

"But the Govvy's best bet is that line a wise bird pulled: 'You can't beat somebody with nobody.' It's only when a couple of somebodies get in a jam that the nobody gets a chance to show—like when the G. O. P.'s went slumming and took Warren Gamaliel.

"McAdoo is out—he admits it himself, but I believe it because he didn't know it till they were picking the knuckles out of his chin. The rest are bush-league sheiks, Ritchie, Walsh, Reed and the grand old permanent wave, Oscar Underwood. They're the berries with the home girls but not such a hot noise out in society. I can't see where any of those wistfuls can get what it takes.

"So Al has the edge. I don't claim he'll breeze, but he'll cop, and I don't think it will go the full 439 frames at that. He'll swallow bitter to some of the boys but he'll snag the D. C. And by that I don't mean District of Columbia. November is something else again."

"There's many a slip twixt the cup and the lip," said Dr. Sawyer, the specialist on frustration.

"And you Democrats," said Elmer, "are the lads that can make 'em all."

FELIX RAY.

Voices

PULPIT

THIS particular curate is one of the soundest and least conspicuous in the whole Church. I can see why: at no point does he give alarm. No one in his congregation is ever afraid that he will speak too long, or not long enough, or give out the wrong hymn, or try to move them to tears, or be abnormally dull, or slip and fall on the pulpit steps. His public battles with sin are amiable and lofty pillow-fights, in which nobody gets hurt. He has never been caught saying anything original, or anything directly borrowed. His thoughts don't sound second-hand, neither do they sound like his own. For such thoughts his milky, masculine voice is the perfect vehicle. It probably began its career as honest New England or New Jersey—impossible to say which, for of whatever it once was there now remains nothing. Years of Sunday eloquence, years of careful striving for something just a little bit higher than human speech have been rewarded by an accent which does not exist among ordinary mortals. It is a mixture of bishops he has admired and society-drama English, grafted on to now undecipherable American beginnings. It is round, and mellow, and wilfully precise; it is lubricated, clear, and miraculously obedient; it can be warmly solemn, or gravely inquiring, or eloquently casual, or piously distressed, without exaggerating any of these moods to the point where a sensitive hearer begins to feel discomfort. It is a complicated and ingenious instrument, possessing all the stops save one—vox humana.

You may think that, under all these cultivated notes, a real man of some kind lies hidden, but you are wrong. You cannot strip away the mask for, like Max's Lord George Hell, what once was mask has by now grown into face, and could no more be removed than the face's flesh. And do not mistake the succulent, genteel emotions, which come and go at will like wind from a bellows, for anything so crude as hypocrisy. For the curate, through having so long spoken in calculated organ-tones, has come to feel in them also. The rise and fall of the resonant voice, the quaver of well fed earnestness, the silken basso of pity or despair, the refined boom of warning, the rotund and churchly whisper—these are all effects, of course, but they kindle in himself the same moods that he would have them kindle in his audience. He is sincere, if you like, but retroactively: the voice comes first, the sincerity immediately afterwards. His feelings may be divided into three parts: those he feels naturally, those he invents and imitates with his voice, and those which he begins to feel as soon as he hears his own voice imitating them. And neither you nor he nor anyone else could tell which feeling predominates, nor which one we would be right in calling real.

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Vegetables

"Ah-aw-*yeh*-oh!"—But it isn't as definite as that. It is a cry pure and simple, without consonants, almost without vowels. It is sad, and manly and patient and absent-minded and completely meaningless. There are other street cries, but they are as different from it as faces are different one from another; in all the thousand-clanged and million-murmured streets there is no sound like it. And it is always exactly the same. At about ten o'clock every morning it bursts around the corner of the street; you look out, and sure enough there is the white horse and the cart and the man in rusty clothes. The horse is fat, clean, ribless, a perfectly regular horse, and the beans and tomatoes in the cart are definite, ordinary vegetables. But the man is vague and blunt-faced and rust-colored, and what he cries so emptily says nothing about the cart or the horse or the vegetables or himself. "Ah-aw-*yeh*-oh!" He wears large horn-rimmed glasses, but they are only an accident, like the black spot on the horse's shoulder, and shed no light on the meaning of his cry. Through those thick glasses he looks up once in a while at the windows, but nobody leans out, nobody calls back, Hey Mister; Hey, Vegetables; nobody wants any of his stuff. There are plenty of other streets, and all of them in turn will echo with that absent-minded cry.

In the Classroom

Sound is more important in education than words. I have in mind two professors each of whom has spent his best days trying to make substitute half-backs and assistant cheer-leaders realize that life, a mile away from the campus, is a complicated and uncomfortable phenomenon. Professor A., because his natural gifts lie in that direction, disturbs his students' placid minds with the help of a magnificently suggestive larynx. Professor B., whose throat produces feeble, brittle, despairing noises, relies solely upon the power of logical words. Professor A. sends out into the world every year several hundred souls who have caught, from the ups and downs of his voice, a strong but impermanent feeling about such things as the "many races that have lived on the earth," "the present—stepchild of the past," and "our solitary, incompetent possession of a small planet." His words often mean nothing, but his tone means a great deal. He could talk sense if he wanted to; instead, he has deliberately chosen to dilute his meaning down to such a point of liquidity that it can be sprayed over the whole class like mild beneficent rain, wetting equally the grinds, the morons and the vast majority of cheerful deaf-mutes in between. Since so few of them are capable of falling under the spell of words, he puts all of them under the spell of his voice, and so implants, in those inaccurate, impressionable minds, something not quite as crude as an emotion, but not nearly as difficult as an idea.

Professor B.'s grumbling speculations, whispered brilliances and inaudible ironies are all delivered in the same voice: that of a man with a mole burrowing in his chest; that of a man who has found the best way to disguise pearls so that the swine before whom the curriculum compels them to be cast will not eat them after all.

Song

When P—, of the opera, sings at private parties (which he is glad to do for about five hundred dollars), it is well not to be too near. I am sitting under his nose, in the shadow of his immaculate bulk, under the Niagara of his tremendous voice. If I wanted to, I could touch his varnished boots, which are of one piece like a tailor's dummy, and suggest a frame that, underneath the evening dress, is all splendid solid wood up to the throat. He is singing a group of light things, mostly about Love, or Liebe, or Amore, and at the high spots, namely, the words Amore, Love or Liebe, he rises slightly on one of those shining seamless feet, while pointing the other tiptoe, and to the right. The songs are impeccably united in a loose-leaf note-book, black and well tailored like the rest of him. The note-book is held elegantly, in both hands, just at the level of the bulge normally produced under white waistcoats by the rigors of grand opera. He consults it sparingly, with condescension, as a courteous recognition of the evening's informality. The face that glances at the note-book—but to do justice to the face I ought to stand up. From my lowly position the face seems an overhanging crag, coarsely mobile, crafty, pink and proud. I am sure that from the other end of the room it seems to be expressing artistic tenderness and woe.

I can tell, by the intake of breath into that starched and vaulted chest, when the glorious crescendo is going to come. And when it comes, it is glorious indeed. It rises up, and up, and up, free and effortless and splendid as an eagle, and hovers lightly, and soars again, golden conqueror of the air, and then dives down, down and is suddenly swallowed and silenced behind prosaic, pursed, conceited lips. And that which was god, or at least divine animal, sinks back into man again, into an opera singer, with studied bows, and a loose-leaf note-book full of Love, and Liebe, and Amore, and beady self-appreciative eyes.

Robert Littell.

Mass Meeting

THE bell in the tower of Old East Hall is tolling—a quick, high note of alarm. The air is cold, sharp, quick with frost. Out of the darkness comes the swift hush-hush of many feet hurrying through fallen leaves. The parade is forming at the cannon.

Already several hundred have collected. Kerosene torches, stuck in the ground around the cannon, breathe orange flames up into the darkness, and copper the elms and the ivy-covered walls of Standish and Malone. The blank windows waver red and silver in the light. The faces of the gathering crowd are white and mask-like. The bass-drummer pounds his drum steadily, a booming monotone. High overhead in the darkness, the bell rings and rings.

The cheer-leaders, in black sweaters and white flannel trousers, run to and fro, forming the stragglers into a column.

"Line up! Line up! This way! Freshmen at the end!"

The head cheer-leader, standing a little to one side, impatiently swinging a megaphone, calls to the others:

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"Let's go!"

The cheer-leaders bawl in unison:

"One long roar! One long roar! Are you ready? Hi-i-ip, Hi-i-ip—"

The long cheer crashes out raggedly, thinning quickly into the air.

"Terrible!" yells the head cheer-leader. "Come on, now! Let's hear you!"

Once again. Louder this time. The late arrivals are running now. The long irregular line numbers near a thousand. With a smash of cymbals and a double boom-boom from the drum, the band strikes up the marching song. The parade moves off.

Four abreast, headed by the band and the torch-bearers, the parade winds through the campus, picking up stragglers as it goes. Whenever they pass a lighted window, the crowd set up a yell, "Everybody out! Mass meeting! Everybody out!" The light always goes out with suddenness.

By the time they swing into College Street, nearly two thousand undergraduates are marching behind the blaring band. The townspeople stand on the sidewalks and stare. Usually their stare is vaguely hostile, but tonight they look proudly at these marching warriors. Not a shop on College Street, including the Bank, but has its placard in the window, "BEAT PAYNE!" The town has a lot of money on the game.

Now the paraders turn off College Street into the campus again, and storm into Hercules Hall, scramble and clatter into the bare auditorium, shove into the banging seats.

The head cheer-leader is waiting on the platform. While the tail-end of the rear-guard is still jammed in the doorway, his megaphoned yell rings dizzily around the galleries,

"One long roar! And make it a good one!"

On a pontifical throne behind the cheer-leader sits the president of the college, dignified, inconspicuous. When the team file on to the platform, and take their seats in a semi-circle behind him, he is lost in the savage uproar. But the cheer-leader has not forgotten him. When the tumult is subsiding, he springs to the front again.

"One long roar for the President!"

The cheer booms up, solid and solemn. He is their high priest. He will bless the hosts and send them out to the battle. He stands there, in the dignity of his office and his sixty years, wipes his eye-glasses, clears his throat. His eye looks calmly, proudly, about the packed auditorium.

"Men of Alamayter," he begins. "This is a momentous occasion—" On Saturday they will play Payne, their ancient foe. He hopes they will quit themselves like men. He is sure they will. He himself, unfortunately, will not be able to be in the cheering section in person, but they may be sure that he will be "rooting earnestly" for Alamayter. He is usually chary of making predictions, but on this occasion he cannot forbear. If the spirit of the undergraduate body is any indication, we will beat Payne. And he believes that we will beat Payne.

A quick yell of applause, brief hand-clapping. The President bows, smiles at the team, makes a dignified exit through the wings, pursued by one more long roar.

Now the song-leader takes charge.

"Fellows, Payne's going to have a damn sight bigger cheering section than we have. I want you fellows to show me tonight that you can drown 'em out. Make it loud, you freshmen! *Let's go!*"

Two thousand voices thunder in unison the opening bar of the college marching song. But the song-leader will have none of it. He leaps up and down frantically, waving his arms disgustedly.

"Awful!" yells the song-leader. "Terrible! Make a little *noise!* Come on now—let's *hear* you!"

In the gallery where the freshmen and sophomores sit jammed together, a sophomore leans forward and hisses to the freshman in front of him:

"Put some *guts* into it, freshman! If you can speak above a whisper when this is over, I'll give you the time of your life!"

A slow red spreads into the freshman's ears. On the next chorus, the veins in his neck stand out rigid, and his cracking voice can be heard even above the bellowing around him. But the sophomore has tasted blood. Between songs and cheers, he peers around him with accusing eyes, and remarks loudly to his neighbors that there's only one worse traitor than the man who stays away from a mass meeting, and that's the man who comes and doesn't yell his heart out.

One by one the members of the team stalk forward on the platform to "say a few words." Eddy Moriarity, the line-plunging back, with a build like Neanderthal man. Mooch Kelly, all-American tackle. A mean pair of hands. Runt Spivis, the quarterback; the hardest man on the team to hurt. Sport Richards, the Adonis of the campus. All are solemn, determined, and say earnestly what the rest have said. "Fellows, we're going to beat Payne." Each pledges himself, before his peers assembled, to fight hard for Alamayter, to give his all. All will give their all.

And now a momentary hush. The cheer-leader, his voice already hoarse, announces the climax of the rally. The Coach! Bill Kilgore, all-American end in '07. A forceful speaker. Ask the team. He will say a few words to us. Jehovah, Lord God of battles!

Bill Kilgore, coach of the Alamayter team, comes forward. He has put on some weight since 1907. But see his jaw. And that eye of a tiger. He has a brow like Alexander's.

"Men!" he barks. There is not a sound in the auditorium. The freshmen hold their breath.

"Men! We're going up to play Payne on Saturday. We're going up to play Payne, and we're not going in any light-hearted spirit. No! We're going up against one of the best teams Payne ever had! And we're going to win! *If*—you do your part. The team will do theirs. You heard what they said. And you can take it from me, they'll do what they say! They'll be right in there, fighting every minute of that game, and giving the best they've got to give. If I see one of those men miss a tackle—out he comes; I don't care if it's the captain himself! They'll play hard and fight hard as long as they can stand up—and longer if they have to! There'll be no substitutions for any man unless he breaks a leg! *But they can't do everything.* It's up to *you* fellows here to see that they get

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the kind of fighting support they deserve. When this team comes out on the field next Saturday before the game, I want to hear a yell from you that'll make that stadium rock! [Terrific cheers.] Better than that! And it isn't only the *noise* you make: it's the spirit you put into it. Do you know what's going to win that game on Saturday? *Spirit!* the winning *spirit!* The *fighting* spirit! The team's got it—*have you?* [Roars of "Yes!"] Boys, I've known this football business for some little time now, and let me tell you something. The people that think football is a *game*—are crazy. Football isn't a game; it's a battle. It's a war. And we're in it to *win!* What use do you think a *good loser* is in a *war?* We don't want good losers. We have no use for 'em. What we want is a football team that will *win!* [Savage applause.] This team will have to play better and fight harder than they know how, to beat Payne. *I believe they'll do it.* But they can't do it unless you up there in the cheering section are right in there behind them, fighting every inch of the way! When one of our backs hits the line, hit that Payne line with him! And when Payne's got the ball, knock that Payne line back! Shove till you crack the cement! Yell till you've lost your voices—and then go on yelling! I know there's not a man of you that doesn't wish he could be down on that field on Saturday, helping Alamayter beat Payne. I know you wish you could *do* something to help this team win. Well, you can't play with them, but here's something you *can* do. When you get up to Payne Saturday, how are you going to act? Are you going to slink around the streets as if you didn't belong? As if you were apologizing for being an Alamayter man? Or are you going to walk those streets as if you owned the town? Men, here's what you can do to show the team you're *with 'em!* When you're up in Payne Saturday, and you see some Payne men coming along the sidewalk, *shove 'em off!"*

Terrific, menacing yells and prolonged uproar. A wild-eyed cheer-leader springs to the platform, rasps through his megaphone:

"One long roar for Alamayter! One long roar! *Come on now!"* Once more the windows shudder as two thousand voices crash in fierce unison against them. The solid waves of sound leap back harshly, stunningly, from the walls. Voices break in this last effort, and there is a high overtone of desperation, animal, savage.

It is enough. Even the cheer-leader is satisfied. He claps his hands, and screams, voicelessly, but his gesture is pleased. He leaps down from the platform, and the song-leader takes his place. Now there is a solemn hush, and a furtive clearing of racked throats. The song-leader raises his hand. Everybody up! It is the college hymn.

Huskily at first, and softly, the chant rises. Doxology of a religious war. The team are singing, too. Who is the happy warrior? Only look. This is an army with banners.

The echoes die. The army dissolves into a crowd, shuffling, straining into overcoats. They struggle down the aisles. Here and there one slaps a friend on the back, and one or two fall again into the slouch of the civilian undergraduate. But the spell of this dedication is still strong. For the most part they go out in a dazed quiet, staring aimlessly around, or talking to each other in hoarse understones.

As the slow mob pours out of Hercules Hall, and spreads in divergent eddies over the moonlit campus, the moon itself, huge and red, hangs, baleful, over the horizon.

Joe Falsington, the college atheist, coming down the steps with two friends, points to it, shrinking shiveringly deeper into his overcoat.

"A portent!" he croaks. "Woe to the vanquished!"

T. S. MATTHEWS.

The Reinhardt Shakespeare

A Midsummer Night's Dream. Century Theater, November 17, 1927.

ONLY a very few years ago this production of Shakespeare's play by a Reinhardt company would have raised a great stir; there would have been raging contentions for and against; illuminations around the whole subject of production and revivals of plays; curiosity about these celebrated foreign actors, their methods, and so on and so on. Today it must be said that the splash that the event has made, compared to "The Miracle" or to the coming of the Moscow Art Theater, is very moderate indeed. We may wonder about the reasons for this quiet and this polite enthusiasm and interest, where the "Midsummer Night's Dream" is concerned.

There are many elements involved to be thought upon, but not here at any length. For one thing, less theory about the theater is in the air. The theater atmosphere is much less charged with brains and creative ambition. For another, the subject of decor and production is a little used up. For another, we are already familiar with the general Reinhardt method; it is no longer novelty, though that is nothing against it. For another still, such a play as this does not give any one actor or set of actors a chance to act overwhelmingly, a chance to knock us down. And finally, the stuff for publicity on these foreign importations is about exhausted. On "The Miracle" and the Moscow Art Theater we have spent all the Oh's and Ah's, the superlatives, best ever's, the infinite pains, marvellous organization, stupendous enterprise, eye-opening technical infinity items, that were available; there is less to say all round about the Reinhardt venture as it comes to us this time; there is less publicity possible and the venture must suffer accordingly, for we live by publicity.

And yet the fact remains that Professor Reinhardt's production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" is far and away better than "The Miracle" was. It is more sincere and whole, partly because it deals less in profound and mystical matters, and is more within this producer's range. It is quite as well engineered, or better. It is better acted and a better drama. It is, indeed, taking the theater art on all sides, and also in view of the fact that this company of actors is new to us and authoritative abroad, the most important and interesting thing in town.

That said, we may go on to the objections that I, for one, should make, though they are not many. In the first place, then, the production is a trifle swamped with

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pantomime and dancing—the spot, for one instance, where the dancer rises from where she lies in the middle of the scene, circles around, and is joined by the male dancer, is not needed and could be cut, except for that final effect of the fading light. I see no reason for making Demetrius such a comic, vocally and otherwise; the text suggests only witticisms. The sum of the whole occasion is a little stodgy, though for me not much. At any rate, it is removed from us racially, and seems something less inspired at times than we might wish, a bit more German than is right for us. The people on the stage lack glamor too often, their voices are not rich or persuasive enough, their bodies are dull, their faces unbeautiful.

But that said, all is said. The management of the stage levels, the perfection of the ensemble playing, the smoothness of the direction, were all mastery to the last degree. As for the glamor, there are two things to be said: First, the glamor of this play of Shakespeare's may be easily over-imagined. The memory of certain enchanting fairy speeches and certain hints of woodland magic that linger in the mind and work their secret charm may easily lead us to think of the whole piece as shimmering and ravishing, where it is, as a matter of fact, often worldly and very cool Renaissance, and, except for the scenes where the fairies move and speak, not even poetic beyond certain conceits and complex elaborations. Second, we cannot quite judge the extent of the glamor conjured up in this Reinhardt production without such a knowledge of German as would afford the last *nuance*—the figure standing on the high knoll in the secret, enchanted light may lose some of his spell through the absence of the word medium on which the poet counted to ensnare you.

Whenever a reform is broached, we see people who, as they weigh its perfection, assume all the time that the system it contrasts with is perfect; all enemies of a new marriage scheme talk as if the one we now have is an ideal success. To value Professor Reinhardt's contribution wisely, we have only to think closely about the productions of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" that we have seen. In most of them a few recitations, but after that, what? young ladies skipping through the fairy woods, and as Puck—Puck the soul of the god Pan, Puck the spirit out of the ground, the elf of mischief and sylvan mirth—a young lady player—that itself is enough said.

The Reinhardt company, assembled and trained through so many years, is so distributed in such a production and such a play as this, that it is useless to try to judge it; that had best be left to other occasions. Most of all stood out the Puck of Wladimir Sokoloff, finely characterized, beautifully and delicately felt, a pure, free, impish little wood-god, elusive, wistful and lovable—what, I should think, Shakespeare meant and loved, when he wrote the part. The artisans shone brightly enough, especially Mr. Otto Wallburg's Bottom; Mr. Hans Thimig as Lysander had a fine style. As for the celebrated Alexander Moissi, I should want to see him in something else before I have any opinion at all; what I feel now is a disappointment so far as his voice goes, though there is every subtlety in his use of it and in the reading of his lines. He is, as you see at once, a past master in movement and the employment of his physical equipment.

There is one piece of invention in the production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" that must not be forgotten, so compact of imagination it is, so suddenly poetic and right, once it was conceived. That is where, when the play is almost done and we see the fairy world on the point of fading from our view, Oberon, in his last speech, instead of speaking, suddenly begins to sing the lines, as if the whole substance of the dream rose and floated away into the realms of music out of which it drew and to which it returns.

The setting consisted of an arrangement of slopes and winding levels, with places where the actors might suddenly appear or as suddenly vanish, and on the sides a series of shapes that, with changes in lighting, could be either the columns of Theseus' court or the trees in the wood; at the back was an open space where great stars hung and sometimes the crescent moon. The lighting made use of every effect, one of the most interesting of which was the distinct spotting by which the figure to be seen and heard was followed; the scene was defined as the dramatist separated it to itself, while the rest of the stage sank away into rich shadow or faint rhythms of life and movement.

For me a large percent of the pleasure of this production arose from the costumes with which Mr. Ernest de Weerth invested it. The fairy costumes seemed to me less successful, though good enough. But the costumes, so well cut and painted as well as designed, of Theseus, Hippolyta, Lysander, Demetrius and the rest of those eloquent and ornate Athenians, who step so goldenly out of the poet's Renaissance, seemed to me the most magnificent stage clothes that I have seen in a long time. They were reminiscent of the tapestries of Henry Quatre's time, of the court ballets of Louis XIV, of Veronese, of certain German painters, engravers and weavers of that day. When they walked about the scene, when they came from above, down the palace stair, to the sound of Mendelssohn's music, played by an orchestra in the upper gallery of the theater, these figures, with their skirts, sleeves, coats, head-dresses, had for their scenes and speeches all the right bombast, style and excess, and the right erudition and glamor.

STARK YOUNG.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Child and His World

SIR: The deluge of articles about children now appearing in our magazines leads to the inevitable conclusion that, if we are to know anything about their likes and dislikes, we must, first of all, stick pins through them and hold them before us like blue-bottle flies. In that fashion, so it seems, we can understand them; for, verily, they appear more as mutations to the authors of the articles than as normal children.

The growth in the publication of children's books has led to a growth in the publication of articles pertaining, or supposedly pertaining, to the so-called "child psychology." What is the conclusion of the articles? Simply this: that a child is the most compound individual of impulses, reactions, likes, dislikes, etc., to be found in society.

All such theories may be swept away with one brush of the hand. The one fact remaining—and the one fact which seems never to enter an article—is that a child is fundamentally inter-

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ested only in himself. And it is with this alone in mind that a writer of children's poetry or stories can accomplish what he sets out to accomplish.

With the article entitled "Children Really Like Poetry," written by Genevieve Taggard and included in your special section for children in the issue of November 16, I take issue. The author here has attributed a detective-like sense to the child—a consciousness which, if it be true, is certainly alarming. She writes:

> There are many big words he cannot get people to define. . . . His parents and teachers act in incomprehensible ways, seem to be pressed forward by some invisible hand at the back of the neck. . . . This baffling parent, with all his flaws and funny-spots, must be thoroughly tested, if the child is to get along at all, or ever be able to bend anyone to his will.
>
> And then, over the parent's shoulder, he glimpses the world.

If these things are true, and the child's world, as stated by the author, is a "real world," are we not terribly off the track in our attempts at fantasy, imagination and the bits of sophistication we write into our juvenile verse and prose? Are we not giving something to the child which he has, let us say, "laughed off" a good long while before?

JAMES LARWOOD.

New York City.

Attention Chicago Readers

SIR: Believing that the readers of the New Republic have a great many interests in common, a group of men and women have formed a fellowship, whose object it is to get together for the interchange of ideas on, and to stimulate an interest in, civic, political and educational problems, and to meet socially.

Will the Chicago readers of the New Republic, who feel that they may be interested in such a group, write to the undersigned at once, at 7217 Yates Avenue, as a meeting is to be held very shortly.

CLAIRE P. GREEN, Secretary.

Chicago, Illinois.

Propaganda Fides

SIR: What we Americans need is a Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide, with headquarters in the Chicago City Hall and an Index Librorum Prohibitorum, and an Officio S. R. Inquisitionis Reprobantur in every state. The situation is dark with peril. In the library of the University of Colorado I took from the open shelves a bulky volume of 4,009 pages entitled "The Home Book of Verse," bearing the imprint of a New York publishing house. It is daily thumbed by scores of students, sons and daughters of red-blooded Americans. Opening the book, what do I see? The virile verse of American authors? Only in part, and very small part. The greater part of these four thousand pages is filled with the vainglorious effusions of British scribes, from Chaucer to Kipling! Not a single American Indian or Negro bard in the lot! Even under the head of "America," I find inserted insidious invocations to England!

> Lo, there is England! When thy destiny
> Storms on thy straw-crowned head, and thou dost stand
> Weak, helpless, mad, a by-word in the land—
> God grant thy daughter a Cordelia be!

And this:

> —children brave and free
> Of the great Mother-tongue, and ye shall be
> Lords of an Empire wide as Shakespeare's soul—

Also this:

> Yet lives the blood of England in our veins!
> And shall we not proclaim
> That blood of honest fame
> Which no tyranny can tame
> By its chains?

And again:

> Kinsmen, hail;
> We severed have been too long,
> Now let us have done with a worn-out tale—
> The tale of ancient wrong—
> And our friendship last long as our love doth last—

Here we bow the knee not to King George V, but to King George III:

> Steadily steering, eagerly peering,
> Trusting in God your fathers came,
> Pilgrims and strangers, fronting all dangers,
> Cool-headed Saxons, with hearts aflame.
> Bound by the letter, but free from the fetter,
> And hiding their freedom in Holy Writ,
> They gave Deuteronomy hints in economy,
> And made a new Moses of Saxon grit.

This to entice the nature-lovers:

> Thy prowess and thy glory dazzled first;
> But when in fields I saw the tender flame
> Of primroses, and full-fleeced lambs at play,
> Meseemed I at thy breast, like these, was nursed;
> Then mother—Mother England!—home I came
> Like one who hath been all too long away!

There are a score of the like, but I will conclude the concert with:

> God save our gracious King
> Long live our noble King!
> God save the King!
> Send him victorious,
> Happy and glorious,
> Long to reign over us,
> God save the King!

Now let me invoke Don Quixote's zealous priest, the Licentiate Pero Perez, who declared to the Don's housekeeper, when appealed to against her master's library, "those cursed books, of which he has so great a store, and which as justly deserve to be committed to the flames as if they were heretical," that "in faith tomorrow shall not pass without holding a public inquisition against them and condemning them to the fire, that they may no more minister occasion to those who read them." And the same was done, as we are told, one of the few books to escape being the Palmerin of England, "which the Licentiate espying said: 'Let the Palmarin of Oliva be torn to pieces and burnt, that not so much as the ashes may remain; but let Palmarin of England be preserved, and kept as a singular piece; and let such another case be made for it as that which Alexander found among the spoils of Darius, and appropriated to preserve the works of the poet Homer. This book, gossip, is considerable upon two accounts, that it is very good in itself, and because there is a tradition that it was written by an ingenious king of Portugal.'"

Let, therefore, the book-lovers, and especially readers of Shakespeare and Milton, stand aside while Mayor Thompson of Chicago sweeps the schools of English history and purifies by fire the libraries of the land, even as that of Alexandria was said to have been burned by the Caliph Omar and was certainly ravaged by Bishop Theophilus, and as Louvain was destroyed by the Germans.

JOHN T. BRAMHALL.

Boulder, Colorado.

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Northcliffe the Unrevealed

Lord Northcliffe, by R. Macnair Wilson. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company. 304 pages. $5.

ALREADY in 1912 an English journalist, who did not like Northcliffe, wrote of him: "however little we may relish the fact he has become the most powerful man in England." And a year or two later, Northcliffe, after he had overturned one government and set up another and driven from public life a dozen or two non-governmental people, was reported to have said, "No man shall hold high office in England save by my grace." If he did say it (and the present writer heard him say something not very dissimilar), it was not an empty boast. No American newspaper proprietor, despite the modern extension of newspaper trustification and syndication, has ever been able to exercise such power.

Northcliffe could have made other boasts: as that he had done something to change the English character, to make it more trivial, as well as more intolerant and violent; that he had made the mob mind in England more dangerous and destructive than it had ever been before, perhaps; that he had created the tabloid years before America knew it (of his all-picture tabloid "Daily Mirror"—started, however, as a daily paper for women only—Lord Salisbury said: "Mr. Harmsworth, having invented papers for people who cannot think, has now invented one for people who cannot read"); that he had made larger circulations for newspapers than newspapers had ever before known (his Daily Mail has now attained the two-million-a-day mark); and larger salaries for journalists than journalists anywhere (not excluding America) before his time had ever known.

In other words, Northcliffe, if he did not, strictly speaking, create, was at least the instrument and symbol of a certain revolution in the public mind of England, and the astoundingly astute manipulator of certain characteristic forces of our modern world; a prince of demagogues who possessed the common mind to such uncommon degree that the possession gave him a sort of genius; a great manager of men; magnetic and Napoleonic in his personality; a generous and charming companion; a second-rate intellect, and latterly, toward the end of his life, at times half-insane.

Surely we have here a character, unusual, significant, provocative of curiosity, greatly influencing its generation, worthy of serious biographical effort. Yet, so far, it has not had it, and one of the curiosities of a life and influence like Northcliffe's is that it is in real danger of being already almost completely forgotten. Why?

And why should the books which have so far appeared about him be of a character which cannot rank as serious biography at all? Mr. Macnair Wilson calls his present book a "study." It is printed incense; written from the first page to the last in much the tone which the clergyman who gave us the Cherry Tree and Little Hatchet story thought necessary to adopt when he wrote of George Washington; or of the "biographies" of Queen Victoria which a generation ago might have been found on the parlor tables of English tradesmen, entitled "The Jubilee Story of the Good Queen."

The preface to this three-hundred-page book consists of the account of a visit to Northcliffe at the Times office, when he was unwell.

> The very idea that this man whom a whole world at war knew as the tireless champion of freedom should be stricken by illness, chilled my heart. . . . He did not tell me, but I knew then that he cared nothing for his own life except in so far as his life might be of use to his country and her cause. Never at any time have I been conscious of such complete conviction about anything as I was conscious, at that moment, of Northcliffe's selflessness.

The promise of the preface is fulfilled in the book. We are told that Northcliffe's eyes had in them "the light of the sea" (which, incidentally, he loathed, being usually sea-sick); that these sea-light eyes were the mirror of the spirit—"the Imperial idea." The next chapter tells, apropos of nothing that throws any real light on his work, that "with his whole brave soul he abhorred cruelty in every shape and form"; the next, that, though in youth he had to bear the yoke of poverty, "the handsome fair-haired boy bore its galling with a smile on his proud lips" (these are all actual quotations); and that his best reward was his mother's approval. ("Her great son had the wisdom to listen always to the voice of love.") We are told that in his last world journey, Northcliffe's favorite reading was the little book which his mother (then in her eighties, enjoying her wheeled chair) had given him, entitled "Daily Light on the Daily Path." Mr. Wilson tells us he likes to dwell on Harmsworth's youth:

> I like to think of him setting forth each morning with the yoke of his beloved mother's need on his young shoulders and the dogged determination of his breed in his heart. I like to see those candid eyes challenging the new day to yield up to him its store of human interest or of human tragedy and then, afterward, to behold him weaving the strange patterns of news from the warp and woof of his observations. . . . In those lean days of 1882 Harmsworth learned the meaning of "news"; he learned to love news as a man of science learns to love exact observation. Little by little the deep significance of human action, even the most apparently trivial human action, was borne in upon his mind.

Mr. Wilson illustrates these great discoveries about the value of news. An early venture—Answers, a weekly hodge-podge of trivialities—was failing. Harmsworth conceived a really great idea: offer five dollars a week for life to anyone who can guess most accurately the amount of bullion in the Bank of England on a given date. "The announcement thrilled the whole country, as Harmsworth had foreseen that it would thrill the whole country. Even the severe strikes which were then dislocating industry proved a less exciting topic of conversation." (Juxtapositions like this create a fleeting thought that the book may be a vast and over-elaborate joke.) The authorities proclaimed the thing illegal, but, as the author explains, the ban came too late. The Napoleonic mind had conquered. The Harmsworth fortune was made.

Young Harmsworth came to manhood in the England of the eighties, an England fermenting with the yeast of William Morris, Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, Newman, Carlyle, Herbert Spencer, Bradlaugh, Gladstone, Dilke, Parnell, Fabianism, Positivism, Estheticism, the beginnings of Labor and Feminism, Shavianism, Webbism, Socialism. . . . The journalist who was to become the most powerful in England was, so far as we know, completely unmoved by all this; to it all he paid no attention. He turned instead to the bicycle, the camera, to missing-word competitions, boys' hobbies, picture puzzles, paper patterns for women. His flair for these things, which had nothing to do with politics, made him a great political power; for

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a time, master of England's masters. Of that strange fact there is so much that could usefully be said. What Mr. Wilson does is to send up vast clouds of incense, so thick that everything behind remains obscure. One of Harmsworth's first jobs was the editorship of the Bicycling News. The push-bike and its journalism hardly seems to call for heroics, but listen to this:

> Harmsworth's pulses quickened; the sense of exhaustion began to pass away. Here were pioneers, the makers of a new world, laboring at their tremendous task. Here was romance, the very spirit of life. . . . From the vibrating strings, rising and falling in haunting cadences, came the melody of action, the song of the open road promising release and regeneration. Like the old Knights, Youth should fare forth once more, trustily mounted, to learn the joy of wide uplands and great spaces, the pangs of wind and rain and sunlight, the loneliness of evening, the ecstasy of the dawn.

"I have known men who were windy," said Mark Twain once of a contemporary, "but this man blows a gale the whole time." The future Lord Northcliffe, in addition to being editor of the Bicycling News, was also the author of two books, one, "A Thousand Ways to Earn a Living"; and the other, "All About Our Railways." "That," reflected this present reviewer, "has done the blather-merchant in; we can hardly get the sea-light eyes and imperial spirit over those two books." But, we are told, these books:

> Proclaimed . . . in ringing accents, the high achievements and the still higher destiny of mankind—especially the English-speaking portion of it.

Three hundred devastating pages of it. And so they tell us very little.

NORMAN ANGELL.

Cabell and Colloids

James Branch Cabell, by H. L. Mencken. New York: Robert M. McBride and Company. 31 pages.

Prejudices: Sixth Series, by H. L. Mencken. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 317 pages. $2.50.

THE first of these is another testimony to Mencken's admiration of Cabell, who is Mencken's idea of a marvellous literary artist. The second gives us the old hot-gospeller and master rhetorician back among the Methodist bishops, the bartenders and Congressmen, where he is seen to best advantage. The sixth series of "Prejudices" is well up to Mencken's best standard. The opening onslaught on the newspapers is especially effective for Mencken's special familiarity, in this case, with the country he is invading; and there are at least two pieces of writing at his top level—one of them a description of industrial landscape on the outskirts of Pittsburgh and the other an account of the remarkable interview which took place between Mencken and Valentino a week before the latter's fatal illness. Valentino seems to have come to Mencken as to a great wise father, for enlightenment and advice. He had, he considered, been insulted by an editorial in the Chicago Tribune and had challenged the writer to a duel: the only response had been more insult and ridicule at the hands of the newspaper men. What was one to do in such a situation? This, of course, gave his counsellor an opportunity for expatiation on a favorite theme: "Unluckily, all this took place in the United States, where the word honor, save when it is applied to the structural integrity of women, has only a comic significance. One hears of the honor of politicians, of bankers, of lawyers, even of the honor of the United States itself. Everyone naturally laughs." As the conversation continued, however, Mencken began to feel that the trouble lay deeper, and the reflections inspired by the incident supply him with some admirable pages.

The new "Prejudices" include also the usual animadversions on poetry—which, as usual, is described as a mellifluous lie designed to console us for the ghastly reality. Mencken elsewhere in the same volume confesses an inability to take philosophy seriously; and his incapacity for dealing with even the simplest philosophical problems—that is, his incapacity for rigorous and subtle thinking—is actually his principal, and serious, weakness. In what way is the world created by the poets any less "real" than the world created by the scientific writers in terms of molecules, colloids, species and anatomical organs—that world of which Mencken himself writes so well, of which he is, in fact, the poet? Both are imaginary constructions, made possible only by isolating a certain set of the phenomena of experience to the exclusion of all the rest. Neither is "true" in any final sense. Nor do scientists, except the most superficial, regard their diagrams and formulæ as representing anything in the nature of ultimate reality. One was about to say that Mencken's scientific ideas were old-fashioned; but the fact is that there has never been a period when the profounder men of science held the views which Mencken takes for granted as unassailable premises. Mencken's failure to deal with first principles does not, of course, affect the artistic value of the humor and the pathos which he extracts from the materialist picture of humanity. But he remains incurably a poet.

E. W.

A New England Romantic

Trinc, by H. Phelps Putnam. New York: George H. Doran Company. 74 pages. $1.75.

THE poetry of Mr. Phelps Putnam is very well written; he has practised his craft for some years; he has mastered it. Although "Trinc" is a first volume of only seventy-four pages, Mr. Putnam exhibits a maturity and a distinction of style that rank him immediately with the five or six interesting poets who have appeared in the present decade. Putnam not only has the fairly common gift of the poetic phrase, which is frequently only the gift of magazine verse: his poetry is the product of a serious and interesting mind. For this book represents a significant progression from a rich lyricism, enough in itself to get the author a respectable reputation, to a complex symbolism that attempts to organize, in terms of vision, some of the leading philosophical ideas of the age. The progression shows the way in which, with varying materials, the modern poet must go, if he desires to escape from the fashionable attitudes of impressionism and disorder that make up the modern mind.

"Trinc" is appropriately divided into two sections. The first is lyrical verse by a distinguished talent. Here Mr. Putnam is a lyric poet on the expressive level: there is a great deal of beautiful and original imagery, but there is no framework. There is the unity of tone or mood which is the sum of the images in the poem. The poet cannot exceed emotion, and pass into vision, because he lacks the external framework. The difference is between an imagistic series and a symbolic structure. But on the other

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hand, the second half of the book is given to the creation of a mythological framework, upon which Putnam elaborates an intricate, and at present fragmentary, vision of contemporary life. The symbols are quite up-to-date. As a counterpart of Hart Crane's "religious gunman" (I wish to suggest no influence whatever passing between Mr. Putnam and Mr. Crane), "Jack Chance" and several other hard-boiled characters become the mythical heroes of a supernatural America.

Of the six poems that disclose the adventures of these heroes, three assume the narrative form, but it is only in the first, "Ballad of a Strange Thing," that anything like pure narration occurs. The style of this poem is simple and discursive; in structure it is extremely complex. It is, in fact, so carefully integrated, that partial quotations are meaningless, and I refrain. From this poem, which is surely one of the most brilliant ever written by an American, Mr. Putnam proceeds, in the others, to elevate his heroes into abstractions. "The Ballad of a Strange Thing" is thus pivotal between the earlier and later styles displayed in the book.

Having transformed his characters, the poet gives up narration and presents the abstract heroes in a kind of timeless vision. The style gets less discursive; it gets more and more oblique; here and there it is obscure. The most interesting poem of this sort—all are of great interest—is "Bill and *Les Enfants Pendus.*" Here Bill Williams, "wandering around" in the scrap-heap and whirl of modern life, comes upon three worthy adventurers:

> Then in the very midst, in Boston, Bill
> Came to a blossoming tree, and thereon hung
> Three young men by the neck and were not dead.
> Before them stood three amphoras of gin
> And in their mouths their words bloomed like the tree.

To match the effect of this passage, one could go to the Divine Comedy; it has something of the shock of the question that Guido Cavalcanti's father asks Dante, out of the depths of his flaming coffin:

> Di subito drizzato gridò: Come
> Dicesti: egli ebbe? non viv' egli ancora?
> *No fiere gli occhi suoi lo dolce lome?*

The ingenuity, however, with which Mr. Putnam prepares for these surprises of contrast, results more often in a *nouveau frisson* not unlike that sought after so diligently by the French Romantics. Putnam's lines

> In Springfield, Massachusetts, I devoured
> The mystic, the improbable, the Rose—

are, of course, much nearer Baudelaire than to anything in Dante. The typical instance of the romantic "shudder" is Baudelaire's sudden transition, in "Femmes Damnées," from an impersonal description of perverted sensuality to a dire, equally impersonal vision of its consequences:

> Descendez, descendez, lamentables victimes,
> Descendez le chemin de l'enfer éternal.

Mr. Putnam's verse affords the reader a considerable intellectual interest. His attitude springs, in part, from the current romanticism of the "hard-boiled," the main feature of which is the worship of the crude, the barbaric, the "un-intellectual." Whether the especial prevalence of this attitude among New England writers has any significance for culture, I am not prepared to say. Yet one of the curious things about the present-day revolt against intellectualism is, at any rate, the amount of intellectual ability enlisted in behalf of the *révoltés*—Mr. Putnam's own attitude being a kind of inverted highbrow-ism. For Putnam's world, wherein the roughnecks, Jack Chance, Bill Williams, and Bigelow Hasbrouck are heroes, is much the same world as that of Dr. Whitehead's metaphysics; or any modern neo-realist world where every position implies every other, and thus ceases to be position—where space abdicates to the event, which is not *in*, but *is* time. Putnam's heroes are symbols of time: they are nowhere, doing everything. They are modern symbols, and his sense of the necessity to bring them into consciousness and order sets him apart as a poet of distinguished intentions; the bare preoccupation with them would mark him as the product of his age.

ALLEN TATE.

Nor Jeremiad nor Pollyanalysis

More Contemporary Americans, by Percy H. Boynton. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 231 pages. $2.50.

"MORE Contemporary Americans" might better be called "The Past and Future of Contemporary America," if that were not so pretentious. In a spirit tempered and urbane, Mr. Boynton looks over the changing American scene in the light of its literature, or, more specifically, as revealed by six American men of letters, three of them contemporary in the sense that their appeal is more sympathetically felt now than when they lived and wrote, and the other three in the more literal sense that they are now in the fullness of their power and beating with the pulse of their time. He views it neither with the jaundiced eyes of the Mencken school of criticism nor yet through the rose-tinted lenses of those for whom all is for the best in the best of all possible countries in the best of all possible worlds if only Americans are not deflected from the old American traditions. With these traditions, Mr. Boynton holds, we have already broken. It is the new tradition now being hammered out in the mold that he seeks to assay.

With a deal of penetration, Mr. Boynton takes the college as a microcosm. Here is to be seen not only the process of revaluation, but the division cut by the regimentation and articulation of a newly literated mass—call it the booboisie—and an emergent but already welding minority of protest, criticism and resistance to conformity. On the one hand is, not greater mediocrity, but a more widespread and exigent mediocrity, aggressively seeking to impose itself on that which will not beat into pattern; on the other hand is a group alert to standards, exercising discrimination and capable of maturity. Never before, probably, has the tone of the mass in the colleges been so commonplace and vulgar, so effectively immunized against the influences of civilization. But not even twenty years ago, surely, were there in the colleges so many who were not only rebellious but affirmatively following after other gods, and, what is more, openly voicing their affiliation. There were always those interested in the things of the mind—I do not mean now the routine business of scholarship—but their interest was almost clandestine. It was bad form to admit an interest in ideas, let alone poetry and music. It is no longer bad form. And there is the outstanding fact in our colleges, side by side with clamant and triumphant philistinism.

It is the outstanding fact also in the larger national life. The tabloids, confession magazines and complacently prosperous weeklies number their readers in the millions. The

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reading matter of the mass is all as alike as the daily product of the Ford plant. But also there is a large and increasing public for books seriously concerned with the world of ideas. Never before, surely, was there so much bunk, never was it more pervasive and more successfully determinant of American life. But never before, also, was there so much consciousness of bunk, so much open derision and so clear an aspiration to set one's face against it. Unlike the generality of critics, Mr. Boynton refuses to turn Nelson's blind eye on one of the two tendencies running side by side in contemporary America. If he renounces the larger audience that gives ear to those who cry in clear monotone and stridently, whether on the one note or the other, he gains in respect for the insight and sensitiveness with which he sees beneath the turbulent surface of the America of Coolidge, Rotary and syndicated features.

The six essays dealing directly with American letters are studies of Herman Melville, Lafcadio Hearn and Ambrose Bierce, in the one group, and Joseph Hergesheimer, Sherwood Anderson and Sinclair Lewis in the other. There is something luminous and subtle in the analysis of Hearn and his work, something definitive in the portrayal of the inner conflict between Sinclair Lewis, social pamphleteer, and Sinclair Lewis, creative artist. But most of all, this reviewer, at least, has seen nowhere else in so small a compass so acute an analysis of the anomaly in present-day American culture.

NATHANIEL PEFFER.

The Hero as Plutocrat

Commodore Vanderbilt, by Arthur D. Howden Smith. New York: Robert McBride and Company. 339 pages. $5.

Certain Rich Men, by Meade Minnigerode. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 210 pages. $3.50.

THE process of reconstructing the dead, popularly known as biography, goes on apace. It is a cheerful thought, for those who cherish the hope of an indigenous American biographical literature, that some of this stirring of bones is in the graveyard of the captains of industry. Here are two books across whose pages the hero stalks as plutocrat; and if reliance is to be placed in publishers' lists, others are shortly due.

The American tradition in plutocratic biography has been a deadly one. The snobbery toward commerce and the incapacity for understanding its operations which have characterized the literary mind have kept the best writers away from the field. Those who have been left to essay the task have written in the Samuel Smiles manner of unstinted praise for the homely virtues of their subjects; a few have, on the other hand, denounced them as rascals. Where the narrative has not been biased, it has been dull. It is to the credit of the writers under review that both have managed to disengage themselves from this stultifying tradition.

Both these books contain, first of all, rollicking good stories, skillfully told. And they both bear, unmistakably, the stamp of honest purpose. There is only the almost inevitable special pleading which most artists need in order to make an interpretative portrait consistent with itself. But there is no attempt either to whitewash or blacken the character of the plutocrat. Each figure is treated on his own merits. Among the seven rich men in Mr. Minnigerode's gallery, there are gradations of virtue and villainy. Stephen Girard is seen as an eccentric merchant prince whom grief and boredom drove to the labor that led to riches; Astor, though he scarcely comes to life in the meager sketch allotted to him, is "the butcher, the baker, the fortune-maker" who became the wealthiest man of his day on foreclosed mortgages and the unearned increment from rising realty values; Jay Cooke, with his seraphic face and patriarchal beard, is done *con amore,* and turns out to be no less an angel than he looks. The other four men —Drew, Vanderbilt, Gould, and Fisk—appear in both books: in Mr. Minnigerode's as separate sketches, in Mr. Smith's as three lesser luminaries around the bright star that was Commodore Vanderbilt. The two authors strike something of an accord in their interpretation of these picturesque figures in the buccaneering finance of the fifties, sixties, and seventies. Drew is the mean, sniveling hypocrite, Gould the crafty, unprincipled rascal, Fisk the grand buffoon; of the four, Commodore "Corneel" Van Derbilt is, in spite of peccadilloes, the only figure of basic integrity and heroic proportions.

Mr. Smith goes at his job of drawing a life-size of the Commodore with an enormous amount of gusto, and correspondingly little restraint. He has chosen for treatment a figure gnarled as an oak and profane as the soil from which it rises, and he has seen fit to give his style the same qualities.

Mr. Minnigerode's is a somewhat quieter book, but not to such an extent as to fall outside the modern staccato manner of writing. He has not been afraid to preface his book by a bibliography, and has drawn to good effect upon contemporary newspaper material. His seven short sketches, except for a somewhat monotonous sameness in their beginning and ending, furnish pleasant reading, and manage to convey a sense of the color of the period, as well as the character of the man. His previous researches in American biography have given him a background, as well as a style.

Yet, after the usual reviewers' amenities have been set down, and after every assurance has been given that, as recent biographies go, these under review are very competent and ought to sell, a few words still remain in criticism. Both volumes suffer considerably from the generic faults of the "new biography." In common with the others, their chief aim is to convey a sense of the picturesque. Such an objective is a valid one, but valid only within the more important limits of sympathy and proportion. On the score of sympathy, little fault is to be found with either of the two authors; the "intimate biography" does less injustice to the rough-hewn, earthy figure of the plutocrat than it does in other instances. But on the score of proportion, considerable fault is to be found. If, as a biographer, you wish to make a man's personality as picturesque to the reader as it is to yourself, you ask certain questions about him, and select the material which answers them. But for a more important biographical purpose—that of tracing the growth and incidence of his creative abilities—these questions may be irrelevant or insufficient. In a biographical genre such as the life of the plutocrat, the questions to be asked and answered about the subject are largely dictated by the structure and temper of our social life, and the state of inquiry with regard to it. What were the rich man's incentives in making money? By what qualities did he succeed in attaining his dominance? At what point in his development did he attain the mastery over himself and over men which constitutes the heroic? To what degree was he borne along by the stream of events, and to what degree did he direct it? How did he think, if at all? What was his impact on the imagination and life of his time?

Biography need not be didactic to ask and answer such questions; they may, with sufficient skill, be concealed in the flow of vivid style such as characterizes the books

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under review. But mere vividness of style and honesty of purpose do not constitute great biography. Boswell, it will be remembered, asked questions incessantly. And being himself a man of letters, he asked a significant set of questions about another man of letters.

MAX LERNER.

Fiction Notes

Rebellion, by Mateel Howe Farnham. New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company. $2.

IF "Rebellion" had not won the substantial prize offered yearly for a first novel by Dodd, Mead and Pictorial Review, one would dismiss it tolerantly as another trite, innocuous, and undistinguished piece of fiction. Judged by the more severe standards to which a prize-winning novel is entitled, it is lamentably inadequate. "Rebellion" is concerned with the revolt of Jacqueline Burrell, a wilful and spirited young person, against the stupid tyranny of her father. When he attempts to thwart her love affair with a sterling young carpenter who is something of a prince in disguise, Jacqueline defeats him by means of a device which smacks perilously of the movies. There is material in this story for a moving study of the blind struggles and misunderstandings between two generations, or for an illuminating picture of life in a Kansas town. Mrs. Farnham has misused both of these opportunities. Her novel is cheap in plot, superficial in characterization, and entirely devoid of style. From Ed Howe's daughter one had reason to expect a book more pithy and sagacious. "Rebellion" is not another "Story of a Country Town." E. H. W.

The Beginners, by Henry Kitchell Webster. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. $2.50.

THE BEGINNERS" is an honest, unpretentious, workmanlike novel which somehow has a genuinely American flavor. At forty-six, Edward Patterson realizes that he has not only drifted hopelessly apart from his wife, but that his imagination and vitality have been sucked dry by a sterile office job. On an impulse, he plunges into a hazardous business venture which wakens him to a fresh life and to a new self-knowledge. Mr. Webster excels in picturing the delicate relationships within a family and in evoking drama from apparently insignificant occurrences. There is charm and humor in his portrait of Edward's young daughter, and the whole book has a solid, homely quality which is admirable. E. H. W.

Half Price, by Constance Travers Sweatman. New York: William Morrow and Company. $2.

IN HER first novel, "Young Folk and Old Folk," Mrs. Sweatman presented the respectively restive and perplexed generations with imaginative sense and scrupulous impartiality, but with a tentative and somewhat wabbly literary manner. This season's novel is surer in style and content. There is no uncertainty now. Mrs. Sweatman is the champion of honest, plucky and socially defiant youth, and her story might have been lifted bodily from Judge Lindsey's invaluable source-book. As often happens with literary champions, she inclines to exaggeration in character types, but the story is absorbing in human and emotional interest, and moves swiftly and dramatically to the catastrophe, carrying the reader's sympathy beyond the tale itself toward a reconsideration of social theories. The book is that rare combination—good propaganda and good fiction, and makes stimulating reading from either angle.

D. B. W.

Greenlow, by Romer Wilson. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

THIS simple pastoral is sheep's clothing for the dilemma—arresting even in jazz literature—of a Perfectly Nice Girl thoroughly in love with two men at once! The story's interest is coherent and progressive, and it is told with a complete lack of self-consciousness and winning emotional candor. A strong poetic sense is revealed in the descriptive settings, as well as an Arcadian sort of affinity for pastoral life and natural beauty. There is rough, reedy music in the recital—a rustic melody of earth and flocks and farms and homely passion, wholly artless in effect, which combines with lively emotional interest in the theme to make a romance at once sturdy and idyllic. D. B. W.

Young Orland, by Herbert Asquith. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.

THERE is nothing brilliant nor unusual in this tale of "Young Orland" who grew to maturity during the years of deceptive calm immediately preceding the War, yet Mr. Asquith's second novel has the finish and leisurely charm which so frequently redeem English fiction from mediocrity. Orland, whose birth is surrounded by a veil of mystery and romance, is adopted by a mellow bachelor and is reared in the lovely conventional atmosphere of an English country house. Two wraith-like young girls drift into his life, and after the dreamy peace of his youth comes the War, and adventure, and death. One can imagine that an American novelist might make little of so simple a theme, but Mr. Asquith has managed to treat it with distinction. E. H. W.

Crude, by Robert Hyde. New York: Payson and Clarke, Ltd. $2.50.

ONE is tempted to make the obvious wise crack about Mr. Hyde's first novel and to say that it is neatly summarized in the title, "Crude." Its naïve preoccupation with sex and its breathless, cryptic, staccato style certainly merit the epithet. Nevertheless, there is power and honest emotion in this story of four young people, two of them children of jazz and two of them of the peasant type, who are strangely drawn together in the rough, hurly-burly atmosphere of a new oil field. The tenderness and perception with which Mr. Hyde describes the love affair between Millicent Manning and the inarticulate young boy who works on her father's oil claim, the sudden sensitive bits of phrasing, do much to redeem a novel that is often callow and improbable. Mr. Hyde has the gift of vitality, and in time he may do good work. E. H. W.

Adam and Eve, by John Erskine. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. $2.50.

THOUGH He Knew Better" is the sub-title of John Erskine's latest reinterpretation of tradition, and in this reviewer's opinion it applies to the author as well as to the protagonist. After the crescendo in structural power from "Helen of Troy" to "Galahad," it is disappointing to be thrown back on bright conversation as a substitute for dramatic human interest. The Original Triangle is presented, to be sure, with sardonic glee—

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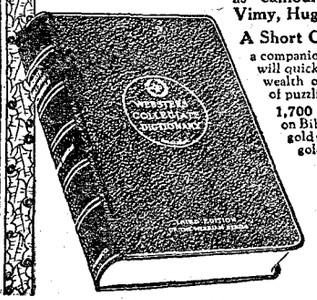

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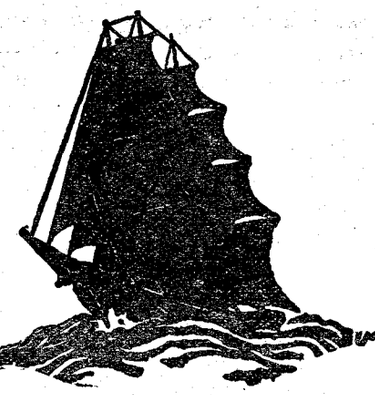

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Adam being the typical obtuse, well meaning wabbler between Lilith—whose acute emotional wisdom is slightly marred for the reader, if not for Adam, by her patronizing complacency, and Eve—whose sharp intuition is wholly devoted to exploiting the subject male. But the situation is never more than scaffolding for dialogue, which—while it has many exhilarating moments and will inevitably be read aloud by one gloating sex to the other, does no more than reveal Adam as every man's essential prototype, Lilith as every man's recurrent dream, and Eve as every man's pervading nightmare. The pickings are excellent in Mr. Erskine's Eden, but appear not to include the fruits of any Tree of Knowledge. D. B. W.

The Cap of Youth; being the Love Romance of Robert Louis Stevenson, by John A. Steuart. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company. $2.50.

THOSE who take their biography *à la* Barrington will enjoy this story of Stevenson's youthful romance. The author is qualified, by his earlier "Critical Biography," to speak with authority upon the subject, but so sentimental is his method and so incredible the classic romanticism of his characters that even a biographer's guarantee of their real existence will not bring them to life. Fiction would be the kindest description of this work, although it is fiction appropriate to the age of fourteen in the year 1900 and the simultaneous consumption of countless caramels in a deep-cushioned "window seat." D. B. W.

Flamingo, by Mary Borden. New York: Doubleday, Page and Company. $2.50.

SO LADEN with weariness and disgust of life is this refractory romance that it can barely get itself told at all. "What "action" there is whirrs and catches, clanks and dies—explodes again and roars, chokes, backfires and expires repeatedly before it gets off to an account of a psychic affinity. Having all but made the grade it pauses, gasps, and coasts backward to the starting point, with a couple of casualties and considerable emotional wreckage. Mary Borden's nervous, jangling style and grating idiom are well suited to the equivocal quality in her drama and the futility of its conclusion. To this reviewer, the incidental digressions—some rather desperately visionary, some angrily cynical, some (like the delicious "conversation" between London and New York) revealing keen and humorous insight—furnished more enjoyment than the main theme of the novel. D. B. W.

Contributors

S. O. LEVINSON is a prominent Chicago attorney, and the originator of the movement for the outlawry of war.

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